

THE
L I F E
O F

Nicolas Herman,
A Native of *Lorrain*;

Wherein are set forth the great Advantages that arise to a Christian, by preserving in his Mind a constant Sense of the *Divine Presence*.

Done out of French.

To which are subjoined,

MEDITATIONS on the
LORD'S PRAYER,

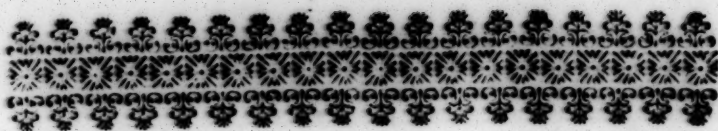
*Translated from the Spanish of LEWIS of
GRANADA.*

EDINBURGH,

Printed by Mr. THOMAS RUDDIMAN, for Mr. WILLIAM MONRO Bookseller in the *Parliament-Cloze*, and to be sold by him and most other Book-sellers in this City. M. DCC. XXVII.

[Price bound in Calf and Titled, 1 s. 8 d.]





The Translator's Preface

To the Reader.

TH E publishing of the following Treatise of the Presence of GOD, in our own Language, is from a sincere Design of promoting the true Spirit of Christianity, and communicating the Ways and Means of attaining it (as the Author has proposed them) to all such as could not read it in the Original.

This will justify the Translator from having any other View but that of the Glory of GOD, and the spiritual Edification of his Brethren.

GOD only knows what great Need there is at present to rouse and awaken Men, by the bright and shining Examples of some of His more eminent and faithfull Servants, and the holy Practices and Rules they have followed, into a Life of more Piety and Religion, and greater Attention to the Motions of GOD's holy Spirit, who speaks incessantly within us, and is the sole Principle of all the good and solid Progress we make in the interior Life. Alas! how easily do the Generality of Mankind in this Age, overlook the great and essential Doctrines contained in the holy Scriptures, and amuse

measure themselves with what is there owned by the only best Judges to be of lesser Moment : So that what Liberties the Pharisees took of old in one Case, the same do many among us in another. What was weighty and substantial in Religion was omitted and despised by the one ; and what is now recommended by such whose Piety, and Vertue, and Retirement from the World, fairly entitle them to greater Discoveries in the Ways of the Spirit, and to a more profound Discernment of the Routes and Progress of the Soul to Perfection, is branded currently for Enthusiasm by the other. This is indeed a very short, tho' a most criminal Way, which some Folks take to bring a Discredit upon Religion, and to tarnish and sully the Lives, Characters and Writings of those happier Souls who have conversed solely with GOD, and in Consequence of this have been by His Grace, and the transforming Operations of His Spirit on their Minds, moulded into a blessed and agreeable Likeness with their Saviour.

This Malady has been now of a long Standing, and nothing but the Grace of GOD will cure it. The only Difficulty then is, how to persuade Men to relish Sentiments which are in themselves pious and fitted for the refining and spiritualizing their Natures, and especially to read, together with the holy Scriptures, such other Books as plainly point out to them the directest Way to the Love of GOD, and Charity ; the mortifying their Passions, and keeping them in a constant Regard and Attention to the Presence of GOD in their Souls, which is the very Sum and Accomplishment of all other religious Exercises. For if we converse much with GOD, we cannot miss to be knowing, and good, and wise :

And

The Preface.

v

And our habitual Conversation with the Deity, will very soon bring us to love Him ; and if we love Him, He will abide with us, and will manifest Himself to us, St. John xiv. 21.

Now because such a Knowledge as this is the Fountain and Origine of Salvation, the Seed of Eternity, and the very Commencement of a blessed Life ; 'tis for this Reason that GOD Himself, by the Prophet, has told us with so much divine Energy, Let not the wise Man glory in his Wisdom, let not the mighty Man glory in his Might, let not the rich Man glory in his Riches ; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, Jer. ix 23.

'Tis true Men are not altogether wanting in the notional and speculative Knowledge of GOD : But a mournfull Experience may teach us, that we fail in the usefull and savoury Practice of it. For who can verily and cordially say with the Psalmist, Whom have I in Heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides Thee, Psal. lxxiii. 25. 'Tis our daily Prayer, That the Kingdom of GOD may come : But that GOD ought, and wants to rule and preside in our Hearts, and there exert His Power and Efficacies, and to be the Principle of all the Life and Vertue that is in us ; Who is wise and understands these Things ?

To this purpose the Royal Prophet has expressed himself in very moving Terms, O GOD thou art my GOD, early will I seek Thee, Psal. lxxiii. 1. Let all these that seek Thee be glad and rejoice in Thee, Ps. lxx 4. And in like manner the Prophet Isaiah exhorts us, Chap. lv. 6, Seek ye

ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. *From which, and many other such Places of Scripture, it appears that there must be a certain way both of seeking and finding GOD within us, and that we ought to take this way, if ever we would desire to be happy in His luminous and delightfull Presence. But who is it among us that reflects on this as he ought? Yea, is not this accounted a Thing very much exceeding Man's Capacity, and so highly transcending his Abilities and Powers, that too too many on this very Score excuse themselves from aspiring to it.*

But that we are all capable of making this Search, allow me to observe, That GOD who is the chief Good and Happiness of the Soul, may be considered by us Mortals in various Ways; and from different Motives, may appear amiable and desireable, and worthy of our utmost Research and Labour. For as in His own simple Essence, He is full of all eternal Perfections, and the adorable Author of all true Good; so the Desire or Appetite of Man, which generally is attracted and moved by an Object proportioned to it's Nature, may find in Him various Reasons, by which, according to the peculiar Turn and Complexion of his Mind, he may be sweetly and powerfully constrained to love and desire GOD: And tho' there is only one and the same Spirit of GOD, whose Residence is in the Ground of the Heart, and whom we all profess to seek after; yet GOD condescends to use the Assistance of various Means, Causes and Reasons, by which He leads us to Himself, who is the eternal Wisdom, and the only worthy Object of all our Love.

On which Account it is, that we see some Persons (from their particular Genius and Inclination, so which GOD is pleased to accommodate Himself) very much carried to divine and serious Thinking; when on the one hand they consider his terrible Judgments, and the dreadful Effects of His Justice; and on the other, the Multitude, the Enormity, and the Turpitude of their Sins: So that GOD moves and disposes those Persons from the Fear, which these or such like Sentiments, in Consequence of the more obvious and pliable Turn and Temper of their Minds, have produced in them, to return to Him, and subject themselves to His divine Will and Laws. And thus a holy Terror becomes the Way and Method by which these Souls move towards GOD, and begin to work out their Salvation.

We may see others wonderfully affected with the Consideration of the divine Goodness, Mercy and Love, and the unspeakable Condescensions of GOD to the miserable Inhabitants of this lower World; by all which they are so powerfully affected, that nothing less can satisfy them, but a most ardent Desire (according to their Ability and Attainment in a spiritual Life) to acknowledge and proclaim this immense Goodness and Liberality of GOD to His Creatures, by a most generous Obedience and Love: So that here again a certain reciprocal Affection and Love is the Way by which they go to GOD, or rather is the Reason why they embrace His Service, and submit to all the Difficulties, Darkneses, Afflictions and Aridities, which cast up in their Way to Happiness.

Others there are again, who that they may serve GOD with greater Freedom and Innocency, retire out of the World, and who by the Means of inward Recollection, and a mental Conversation with GOD, and by some very intimate Operations, gradually establish a permanent and abiding Sense of GOD upon their Souls; which while they conversed abroad the World without any Order or Regularity, they found, if not impracticable, at least not so easily attained. Whence it appears, that such Persons are led to GOD in the Way of a certain genuine Love and Elevation of Spirit, and by some divine and generous Acts of Adoration and Regard, which their Desire after this intimate Conversation with GOD in Solitude and Prayer inspired them with.

In fine, we may observe others unaccountably dull and stupid, and full of disorderly Passions and Affections, who have no Relish of the loving and peacefull Ways of the Spirit of GOD, and who can conceive nothing but what's patent and obvious to their heavy Imagination and Senses, and reckon it sufficient, if they can but in some measure observe any of those Rules and Precepts which are generally prescribed for pious thinking; and that they do a great deal, when by being exercised in these, they can with any tolerable Success check the Violence and Force of their disorderly Passions.

For which Reasons now we are not to be surprized with the Variety of those spiritual Treatises, which tho' they contain perhaps the same Matter of profitable Reading and Instruction, yet nevertheless they may suit the Taste, and hit the particular Disposition and Temper of those who read them :
But

But on the other hand rather, we ought to bless GOD, who raises up so many Instruments in the Course of His loving and holy Providence, to treat of these more powerfull and efficacious Means of a spiritual Life, and from their own happy Experience to recommend them to others. Besides, this Diversity of Devotional Books cannot but afford great Consolation to all good Christians, because the various Ways in the spiritual Life are always the more plainly cleared up and explained, and the Doctrines and Maxims they recommend are like so many Lanterns to the great Body of GOD's People shining through the dark and cloudy Night of this Life, untill the Day dawn, and the Day-Star appear in our Hearts.

Of this kind is the little Book I have put in our own Language. The Subject it treats of, is of the utmost Consequence, and concerns all those who aspire to Christian Perfection; and, as the Author himself has observed, is the easiest, the most compendious, and the most agreeable Way to it. In short, 'tis the Art of living under a Sense of the continual Presence of GOD within us; an Exercise equally suited to the Capacity of the most illiterate Plebeian, as of the more learned and knowing Scholar. Our Author, who was employed for a considerable Time in the most servile Offices, was an eminent Instance of this himself. This is an Exercise which may be practised in the Crowd and Hurry of external Occupation and Labour, as well as in the greatest Retirement and Solitude. GOD is every where present; and if we could but lift up our Hearts to Him, and worship Him in Spirit and in Truth, that is, in a Way becoming the Dignity

of His Nature, we should certainly find Him; for His Delights are to be with the Children of Men.

As to what concerns the Author's Character, 'tis but just I should acquaint the World, that he was a Member of the Church of Rome. The only Figure he made (being a poor illiterate Lay-Brother in one of the Religious Houses in Paris) was in the Practice of the most substantial Piety and Vertue, and in gaining others to the same happy Disposition: And that he was of that Communion, will I presume give no great Umbrage to any Man who is earnestly desirous to be instructed in the Ways of GOD, who is no Acceptor of Persons, and who displays His Grace to all well-disposed Souls, and regards not so much the external Character as the hidden and inner Man of the Heart. Our Saviour (as the Gospel informs us) had a very long Conversation with the Woman of Samaria: He heard her with great Patience and Meekness; and when she told Him of her being of a different Communion, and what Sentiments she had of the Jewish Worship, He was so far from being shock'd or offended at her, that like a loving and mercifull High-Priest, He directed her to the true and spiritual Adoration of GOD.

JESUS CHRIST hath left us such excellent Precepts of Modesty, Christian Forbearance and Charity, that the Practice of them would make us much sooner embrace one another's Persons and Sentiments, than any new Method that is yet invented; at least, they would inspire us with such a noble and generous Temper, as to adore and admire GOD in the Distribution of His Graces as He pleases, and not be pulling out one another's Eyes,
and

and crying down the blessed Experiences that some of our Brethren, of another Denomination only, have in their Souls, because we do not see Things the same Way. This is that in which I would have always different Parties zealous; for there is nothing wanting very often to extinguish Ill-will, but an Opportunity for Men to converse lovingly together, by which they would quickly perceive they are not such Monsters as they are represented to one another at a Distance. Besides, we all know what just Regard is paid abroad the World to the spiritual Treatises of the pious Thomas à Kempis, the late great and good Archbishop of Cambray, Mr. Parson, and others, which are received as Standards of Devotion, and tend very much, in the Judgment of the most disinterested Men (the only best Judges in these Cases) to reform Men's Manners, and to establish the Principles of Holy Living.

This good Man had the same Design. His principal View was to teach Men how to converse with GOD at the same Time they were employed in their ordinary Business; and I can venture to say, the Rules he has laid down will be found infallible, if they are but observed: And I have one great Argument to move for their being put in Practice, which is, because he faithfully followed them himself; and the Reader will soon discover that his Practice was the exact Comment of his Doctrine. I cannot miss to take Notice, that there are a great many very excellent Things observable in his Life, and perhaps of general Use, would Men but read and consider them with a good Intention, and with a humble and teachable Spirit. If any have at-
tained

tained, and enjoy as much or more than is here expressed, let them (as he did) bless GOD for His Goodness; if not, let them not be ashamed to learn and practise more than they have already: And it is no Disparagement to gain Wisdom from an otherwise unlearned Person, because that which is heavenly is the Gift of GOD.

We are assured he was of no Party, nor affected any Sentiments in Religion that were distinguishing or singular: And if the Reader should meet with any Passage in the following Sheets which points this Way, 'tis but his Duty to overlook and pardon it, as proceeding simply from Complexion, or some such other innocent Principle; just as we do the small Imperfections which appear in the greatest Beauties, which are either easily excused or obscured by the great Perfections which attend them.

I have only one Thing more to detain the Reader with, before he enters upon the Perusal of the following Treatise, which is, That I have endeavoured to illustrate some Passages in the Life, and elsewhere too, from the Holy Scriptures, and to explain some Terms which don't so commonly occur in our ordinary Books of Devotion; not so much on account of any Obscurity I thought there was in those Places, as of the younger and less experienced Readers, who either may not understand, or perhaps may be offended at the Height and Sublimity of his Vertue, and the truly heroic, generous and unlimited Resignation he displayed in the sorest internal agonies he suffered for the Love of GOD. And if any Thing yet remains not fully cleared up in these Passages, let it be imputed to my Want of sufficient

The Preface.

xiii

Sufficient Experience in these Matters: But if any Thing is too sublime or uncommon, let us all remember what St. Paul says of the Life of a true Christian, That it is hid with Christ in GOD; and that the natural Men receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of GOD, for they are Foolishness unto him: Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

As for the Translation, if 'tis but clear and exact, and answers the Original faithfully, it is all I intended. May GOD give His Blessing to all the pious Endeavours of His Servants, and teach all of us so to live under a Sense of His Presence while we are here, that hereafter we may behold His Face in Righteousness, and be satisfied when we awake with His Likeness. Amen.





T H E
L I F E
O F
NICOLAS HERMAN.

TIS a certain Truth in Scripture, that *the Arm of the LORD is not shortened.* His Mercy cannot be exhausted by our Miseries: Nor is the Power of His Grace less in these Days, than it was in the Infancy of the Church. And as He is willing there should be to the End of the World, some pious and holy Souls, who should worship Him in a Way becoming His Greatness and Majesty, and who by the Sanctity of their Examples might be Patterns of Virtue;

A

tue ; He was not only pleased to raise up some extraordinary Men in the first Ages of the Church, who should acquit themselves to purpose of both these Obligations, but has further from Time to Time raised up others who might perfectly accomplish these two Duties, and who nourishing in themselves the first Fruits of the Spirit, might transmit it to, and revive it in others.

The Person then whose Character and Sentiments I am to describe, is, *Brother Laurence of the Resurrection*, a religious bare-footed Carmelite, whom GOD raised up in these latter Days to pay Him the Worship and Homage that was due to Him, and to animate his Brethren by the rare Example of his Piety to the Practice of all Vertues.

His Name at first was *Nicolas Herman*. His Parents were a very good sort of People, and lived an exemplary Life. They inspir'd him with the Fear of GOD from his Infancy, and took a particular Care of his Education, proposing only to him such Maxims as were altogether holy and agreeable to the Gospel.

He was born at *Herimani* in *Lorraine* ; and being engaged in the Troubles of that Country, he embraced the Profession of a Soldier : Where living in Simplicity and Uprightness of Heart, GOD prevented him with his Goodness and Mercy.

A Party of the *German* Troops having made him Prisoner, he was taken and treated as a Spy. It was scarce to be imagined how far his Patience and Tranquillity carried him in these
dis-

disagreeable Circumstances of Affairs. They threatned to hang him ; but, without being in the least frightened, he told them, *That he was not such a Person as they suspected ; however, that his Conscience laid no Crime to his Charge, and therefore he looked on Death with Indifference.* Upon which the Officers set him at Liberty.

The Swedes having made an Incurſion into *Lorraine*, and attack'd in paſſing the ſmall Town of *Rambevillier*, our young Soldier was hurt there ; and the Wound he got obliged him to go to his Parents, who were at no great Diſtance.

This Adventure was the Occaſion of his quitting the military Profeſſion, and of taking up with a more ſacred one, and of fighting under the Banner of Jeſus Chriſt. Nor was it owing to the vain Tranſports of an indiſcreet Devotion, that he took a Diſlike to ſuch a noiſy and troubleſome State of Life. No, but by the prevailing Sentiments of true Piety, he reſolved to reſign himſelf wholly to GOD, and to rectify his paſt Conduct.

The GOD of all Conſolation who deſtin'd him for a more religious Life, diſcovered then a little to him the Nothingneſs and Vanities of the World, and touch'd him with the Love of heavenly Things. But theſe firſt Impreſſions of Grace had not at once all the Effect : He often reflected within himſelf on the Danger of his Engagement and Reſolution, on the Vanities and Corruptions of the Age, the Inſtability of Men, the Treachery of Enemies, and the Infidelity of Friends. At length, after

4 *The Life of Nicolas Herman.*

most piercing Reflections, and sore interior Conflicts; after many Tears and Groanings; and in fine, conquered by the Force of eternal Truths, he resolved to give constant Application to the Rules and Practices of the Gospel, and to tread in the Paths of a *religious bare-footed Carmelite* who was his Uncle, and who told him, *That the Air of the World was infectious; and that tho' it did not suddenly kill such as breathed in it, it changed at least, or corrupted the Manners of those who followed and embraced it's Maxims.*

The wise Counsels of this knowing Director made the Way to Perfection easier to Herman. The excellent Dispositions of his own Soul did not a little contribute to this, and the great Judgment and Prudence that appeared even in his Countenance, very soon removed these Difficulties which the Devil and the World generally throw in, when one is thinking to reform his Life: And in fine, that prudent Resolution and Steadiness, which were so natural to him, determined him so generously, that he was brought to it in a Moment, and as it had been miraculously.

It was by meditating on the Engagements of his Baptism, on the Disorders of his Youth, on the Mysteries of Christianity, and especially on the Passion of Jesus Christ, that he was changed into another Man; and the Humility of the Cross appeared to him richer and more excellent than all the Glory of the World.

Inflam'd thus with a holy Fervour, he sought after GOD, according to the Apostle's Advice,

The Life of Nicolas Herman. 5

Advice, in the Simplicity and Sincerity of his Heart: And being of a mature enough Age, wherein he could not well be imposed on, or rashly led into a Mistake; he thought of retiring from the World more than once. The Occasion seem'd favourable, as I shall presently relate.

A Gentleman whose Excellency and Merit might have promis'd him an agreeable Establishment in the World; but who was dissatisfied with himself, and disquieted amidst all his Riches and Grandeur, and being thoroughly perswaded that GOD only could satisfy his vast and craving Desires: This Gentleman, I say, preferred Evangelical Poverty to all the Treasures in the World, and retired into a Desert, there to taste how good and gracious the LORD is to them who seek him in Truth. Our *Herman* improv'd this Opportunity. His Soul at length fatigued with the painfull Life he led, began to desire Rest; and attended with such a faithfull Guide, he went into the Desert, where the Christian Zeal, which animated him, dissipated all his Fears, and where he kept himself attach'd to GOD more than ever. But tho' the solitary Life be excellent for such as are well advanced in the spiritual Life, 'tis not generally the best for Beginners. Our new Solitary was very sensible of this: for finding Joy and Sadness, Peace and Tumult, Fervour and Indevotion, Hope and Discouragement, prevailing by Turns in his Soul; he doubted of his being in a right Way, and therefore wanted to go into a Society, where
the

6 *The Life of Nicolas Herman.*

the Rules being bottom'd not upon the Quick-sand of a passing and transient Devotion, but upon the sure Rock of Jesus Christ, who is the Foundation of all Religion, might encourage and strengthen him against the Fickleness of his Conduct.

Terrified nevertheless at the Thoughts of a perpetual Engagement, and tempted perhaps by the Devil, he could not take this Course. He was daily more undetermined; till at length, listning again more attentively to GOD, who called him by such endearing Attractions, he came to *Paris* to desire the Habit of a Religious, and receiv'd it among the Lay-Brethren of the Order of the *bare-footed Carmelites*, and was called, *Brother Laurence of the Resurrection*.

During his Probation, he applied himself with much Fervour to the Exercises of a religious Life. He had a singular Honour and Regard for the Blessed Virgin, admired and copied after the eminent Graces She was possessed of: And in the many Sorrows, and Troubles that disquieted his Mind, and the many Vicissitudes of his Life, he had an affectionate Confidence in Her Charity; on which account he generally call'd Her his *dear Mother*.

He gave himself particularly to the Study of *Prayer*; and whatever throng of other Business he had, it never made him lose the Time appointed for this holy Exercise. The Presence of GOD, and Charity, which is the Effect of it, were his most beloved Vertues. These made

made him in a little Time a Pattern to his Fellow-Probationers ; and the victorious Grace of Jesus Christ made him embrace with Ardour all penitential Exercises, and even seek after such Austerities as Nature has the greatest Abhorrence of. And tho' the Superiors had allotted *Laurence* the meanest and most despicable Office in the Monastery, yet he never drop'd the least Complaint : On the contrary, Grace (which is never discouraged by what's harsh and uneasy) supported him in the tedious and disagreeable Charge that was assigned him ; and whatever Reluctancy he found from the Side of Nature, he accepted all with Pleasure, reckoning himself too happy either to suffer or be humbled, after the Example of his Saviour. The Notion they had of his Merit, and the Esteem he had acquired by the heroick Acts of his Vertue, obliged the *Master of the Novices*, that he might make a Trial of his † Vocation, and the Solidity of his Judgment, to enlarge on some difficult Cases to him, to crowd him with different Pieces of Work, and to task him as a well advanced Christian : He was so far from being discouraged on account of this Trial, that he stood it out with all the Fidelity that could be expected. This further appeared on another Occasion : for when one of the Fraternity came and told him, That they were speaking of turning him out of

† That is, the interior Motion, by which GOD calls any one to a certain kind of Life.

8 *The Life of Nicolas Herman.*

of the Monastery; his Answer was, *I am in the Hands of GOD: He'll do with me what he pleases. I do not act from any worldly Motive. If I am no more to be a Servant here, I shall serve elsewhere.*

When the Time of his Profession came, he made no Delay to sacrifice himself wholly and unreservedly to GOD. I could relate here a great many of his excellent Actions, which would convince the Reader of the Fulness of his Sacrifice, and might challenge his particular Attention: But I pass them over in Silence, that I may enlarge the longer on the internal Troubles that afflicted his Soul, partly by an Order of Divine Providence, which permitted it to be so, for the purification of his Soul, and partly for want of Experience, since he would take his own Way in the spiritual Life. He considered the Sins of his bypast Life, and the Sight of them struck him with such a Horror, and rendred him so little and contemptible in his own Eyes, that he thought himself altogether unworthy of the least Caresses of the Bridegroom. He found however, that he had very much of His Favour; and entertaining such a humble Sense of his own Misery, he could not venture to accept of the heavenly Treasures that GOD offered him, not yet knowing that GOD was so mercifull as to communicate Himself to such a Sinner as he believed himself to be.

It was then that the Fear of *Illusion* began very powerfully to seize him; and his State appeared so doubtfull, that he knew not what

it would turn to. This afterwards occasioned in him such terrible Torments, that he could express them no otherwise than by comparing them to those of * Hell itself.

In this miserable Condition he went very often into a Closet near the Cook-room, where he had a Crucifix fastned to a Pillar; and there he poured out his afflicted Soul, all bathed in Tears, before his GOD, and conjur'd Him, That He would not let him perish, because he put his whole Trust in Him, and had no other Intention but to please Him.

Notwithstanding the Prayers he offered up to GOD, his Troubles increased by such embarrassing Fears and Perplexities, that his Mind was of a Sudden distracted. Solitude, which he had all along looked upon to be a very safe Harbour, appeared then to him like a Sea tossed with furious Tempests. His Soul was driven like a Ship with Winds and Waves, so that he knew not what Part to act, nor what to resolve. On the one hand, he felt in himself a secret Inclination which moved him to resign himself to GOD, by a continual Oblation of himself to His Conduct; and on the other, the Fear he had of wandring out of the common Road, made him offer an innocent Resistance to GOD. These, and such like Views that were so hard to Nature, fill'd him with Horror. Moreover his Soul was plunged in so much Bitterness, and in such
B thick

* The same was the State of the Royal Prophet, as we may learn from these Expressions, Psal. lxxvii. 3. and cxvi. 3.

thick Darkness, that he received neither Comfort nor Assistance from Heaven or Earth.

This Way, how rigorous and severe soever it be, is nevertheless what GOD often takes, by which to try the Vertue of His true Servants, before He entrusts them with the inestimable Treasures of His Wisdom; and this Method He took with *Brother Laurence*.

One cannot imagine to what length his Patience, his Meekness, his Moderation, his Resolution, and his Tranquillity, carried him during these Trials: For he was so humble as to his own Sentiments and Conduct, having very small Ideas of himself, that he had no real Esteem for any thing else but Humiliations and Sufferings. Accordingly he asked no more but the *Cup of the LORD*, and to drink up whatever was bitter in it. Nor did it ~~you~~ please GOD to gratify him with the least of that Sweetness and † Unction which he felt in the Beginning of his Penitence: No! all was taken from him; and during the ten Years that his Fears and Troubles continued, he had very little Ease or Intermission: No true Taste in Prayer, no Mitigation of his Sorrows; which reduced him to such extreme Necessities, that he became burdensome and nauseous to himself. *Faith* alone was his only Support.

In

† That is, the agreeable and affecting Relish and Sensation of spiritual Things.

In the Multitude of these different Thoughts which reduced him to Extremity, his Courage never left him : On the contrary, in his most violent Troubles, he had always Recourse to Prayer, to the *Exercise of the Presence of GOD*, to the Practice of all Christian and Religious Vertues, to bodily Austerities, to Tears and Groanings, and long Watchings, spending sometimes almost whole Nights at the Feet of the Holy Altar ; where at length as he was one Day reflecting on the Sorrows of his afflicted Soul, and knowing that it was for the Love of GOD, and for fear of displeasing Him, that he suffered them. He immediately entred upon a generous Resolution, to bear those Troubles, not only for the rest of his Life, but even throughout all Eternity, if it should please GOD so to order it. *For (said he) I'm no further concerned about what I do, or what I suffer, if I do but continue affectionately united to His Will ; this being my whole Business.*

Here was now precisely the Disposition GOD wanted him to be in, to heap on him His Favours ; and so from this Moment, the Constancy and Resolution of his Mind increased more than ever : And GOD, who lyes under no Necessity of Times, or much Reasonings, to make Himself known to us, all of a sudden open'd his Servant's Eyes. *Laurence* felt in himself a Ray of divine Light, which penetrating his Mind, dissipated all his Fears, eased and removed his Pains ; and the Favours he *then* received, did more than recompense his past Afflictions. It was now he

found experimentally the Truth of what St. Gregory the Great said, *That the World appears very little to a Soul that contemplates the Greatness of GOD.* The Letters he wrote to a religious Lady of the Carmelites, put this beyond all Doubt. Here's in few Words what they contain.

“ The whole World seems incapable of
 “ pleasing me. Every Thing I see with my
 “ bodily Eyes, passes before me like Phan-
 “ toms and Dreams. What I see with the
 “ Eyes of my Soul, is the only Thing I de-
 “ sire ; and if it but happens to be out of my
 “ Sight, 'tis the Subject of my Sorrow and
 “ Torment. While on the one hand I am
 “ dazzled with the Brightness of this Divine
 “ Sun of Righteousness, which dissipates the
 “ Shades of the Night ; and on the other,
 “ confounded with the Corruption of my mi-
 “ serable State, I am often as it were out of
 “ my self. My ordinary Business however is
 “ to remain in the Presence of GOD, with all
 “ the Humility of an unprofitable, though a
 “ faithfull Servant. ”

This holy Exercise fill'd up his peculiar Character ; and the Habit he had form'd of it, was so very natural to him, that as he explains it afterwards in one of his Letters, and elsewhere too, he spent the last forty Years of his Life in the actual Exercise of the Presence of GOD, or rather to use his own Expressions, *in a silent and familiar Conversation with Him.*

One of the religious Order, whom he could not help answering, having one Day asked him, *What Method he had taken to acquire such a Habit of the Presence of GOD, the Practice whereof was now so very easy to him?* He told him in his ordinary Simplicity, “ From my first
“ entring upon a religious Life, I have look’d
“ upon GOD as the End of all the Thoughts
“ and Affections of my Soul. In the Begin-
“ ning of my Noviciate, during the Time
“ appointed for publick Prayer, I laboured to
“ be convinced of the Truth and Reality of
“ this Divine Being, rather by the Light of
“ Faith than by the Labour of Meditations
“ and long Reasoning: And by this short and
“ certain Method, I advanced in the Know-
“ ledge of this amiable Object, in whose Pre-
“ sence I resolve to abide for ever. Thus pe-
“ netrated with the Greatness of this infinite
“ Being, I shut my self up in the Place where
“ my Duty call’d me, which was the Kitchen:
“ I was there alone; and when I had provi-
“ ded every Thing necessary for my Office, I
“ employed the rest of my Time in Prayer,
“ both before and after my ordinary Labour.
“ When I began any Thing, I said to GOD
“ with a filial Confidence, *My GOD, since*
“ *Thou art with me, and that ’tis by Thy Appoint-*
“ *ment I must apply my Mind to these external*
“ *Things; I beg Thou may’st give me Grace to con-*
“ *tinue with Thee: And that I may act the better,*
“ *labour with me, O LORD, receive my Works,*
“ *and possess all my Affections.* In fine, during
“ my daily Task, I continued to speak fami-
“ liarly

“liarly to Him, to offer Him all my little
 “Services, and to demand His Grace. When
 “the Action was over, I considered what way
 “I had done it. If I found it was well done, I
 “thank’d GOD for it. If it was amiss, I beg’d
 “His Forgiveness. Thus, without being dis-
 “couraged, I rectified my Mind; and I return’d
 “again into His Presence, as if I had never
 “wandred from it. Thus rising up still after
 “my Falls, and multiplying Acts of Faith
 “and Love; I’m come to such a State, that
 “it would be as little possible for me not to
 “think on GOD, as it was difficult to use my
 “self to it in the Beginning.”

Having had the Experience of the vast Advan-
 tage that this holy Exercise was to the
 Soul, he advised all his Friends to apply
 themselves to it with all possible Care and Fi-
 delity: And that they might set about it with
 a firm Resolution and an invincible Fortitude,
 he offered them such strong and powerfull
 Reasons, that he not only gain’d their Judg-
 ment, but even penetrated their Heart, and
 made them undertake and love this holy Exer-
 cise with as great a Fervour as they had look’d
 on it formerly with Indifference. And if he
 had the Art of perswading such as were about
 him by Words, he had it no less by his good
 Example. One needed only but to have look-
 ed at him to be edified; and, tho’ in a hurry of
 Business, he might (by seeing him) have been
 carried to a Sense of the Divine Presence.

He called the Exercise of the Presence of
 GOD, *the shortest and the easiest Way to attain*
Christian

Christian Perfection, the Form and Life of Vertue, and the great Preservative from Sin.

He assured them, that to *facilitate this Practice*, and to form a Habit of it, they needed nothing but *Courage* and a *good Disposition*. A Truth which he has made appear more by his Actions than his Words: For it was remarkable in his Conduct, when he did the Office of a Cook, that in the very Heat of assiduous Labour, and amidst the most dissipating Pieces of Work, he had always his Mind recollected in GOD. Tho' his Business was very great and fatiguing, (for he did very often the Work of two Men,) yet was he never seen in any Hurry, but with a just Moderation he assign'd every Action a competent Time. He had all along a modest and easy Behaviour; and by doing his Work neither slowly nor precipitantly, he preserved still the same Equality of Mind, and enjoyed an unalterable Peace.

He exercised this Office with all possible Goodness for the Space of thirty Years, or thereabouts, till Providence ordered it otherwise: An Ulcer broke out in his Leg, which obliged the Superiors to assign him some easier Business. By this Change he had more Time to worship GOD in Spirit and in Truth, agreeably to his † Attraction, and to apply himself more perfectly in His holy Presence, by the Exercise of Faith and Love.

In

† That is, the pious Motion he felt in his Soul to that or the other divine Subject.

In this *intimate Union*, which cannot but proceed from these two Vertues, the Images of the Creatures, which cost Men Labour to get rid of, were razed out of his Imagination. The Powers of Hell, which never cease their Attempts on Mankind, durst no longer attack *Laurence*. His Passions became so cool, that almost he no more felt them: Or if at any Time to humble him, they excited the least Emotion and Stirring in him, he then resembled those high Mountains which see Meteors a forming below them.

Since that Time he seem'd to have no more but a *natural Turn for Vertue*, a sweet Humor, an intire Probity, and the best Disposition in the World. His good Looks, his affable and humane Behaviour, and his modest and simple Manner, gain'd him quickly the Respect and Good will of all that saw him. The more they conversed with him, they discovered in him a Fund of Integrity and Goodness, which was no where else to be met with.

'Tis very observable, that one Thing he studied was to affect no Singularity in his Actions, but to preserve always a *Simplicity* in his ordinary way of living, without putting on any thing of that melancholly austere Air, which serves only to shock and offend People. For he was not one of those morose uncondescending Folks, who look on Holiness as incompatible with good Manners: He affected nothing, and so made himself easy and sociable to all the World; and dealt ingenuously with
his

his Brethren and Friends, without pretending any Distinction.

He was so far from valuing himself on account of the Favours GOD vouchsafed him, or showing his Vertues from the Motives of Applause and Esteem, that he was singularly carefull to *lead a hidden and obscure Life*. For as the proud Man studies to find out all imaginable Ways by which he may procure a conspicuous Seat in the Affections and Esteem of others; We may say, that he who is truly *humble*, does all he can not only to shun the Applause and Commendation of the Creatures, but even to mortify and deny himself in these commendable and just Sentiments they might entertain of him.

We are told in Antiquity, of some Saints who have purposely done some ridiculous Things, to bring upon themselves the Contempt and Raillery of the World; at least, to give Men a Handle to doubt of the high Idea they had justly conceived of their Merit. It was really so with *Brother Laurence*: His *Humility*, which I may call his peculiar Character, put him sometimes on some pious Devices, and in appearance on some little childish Doings, that he might conceal his Vertue and stifle the Lustre of it. He sought not after Glory, but Reality: And as he wanted none but GOD only to be the Witness of his Actions, so he proposed none but Him for his *Reward*.

But tho' he was much on the Reserve with regard to himself, yet for the Good of his Bre-

G

thren,

18 *The Life of Nicolas Herman.*

thren, he often communicated his Sentiments; not indeed to the more *knowing and literate*, whose Knowledge and fine Speculations very often puff up the Mind, but to the more simple and * *infantine* Souls. And it was always observed, that when he discovered any of this Temper, he kept nothing hid from them, but reveal'd to them with an admirable Plainness and Ingenuity, the beautifull Mysteries of the *interior Life*, and the Treasures of divine Wisdom. The *Union* that accompanied his Words charm'd those so powerfully that had the Happiness to converse with him, that they left his Company all over inflam'd with the Love of GOD, and with a full Resolution to put in Practice the great Truths that he taught them privately.

As GOD conducted him more in the Way of Love than by the Fear and Dread of his Judgments, so all his Conversation tended to inspire others with the same Love, to destroy in 'em the least Attachment to the Creatures, and to kill the old Man, that so the new Man *Jesus Christ* might be re-established in them. *Would ye make a great Progress* (said he to his Brethren) *in the spiritual Life. see that ye make no Account of the fine Words nor the suble Reasonings of the knowing and learned Men of the † World. Wo's them who seek to satisfy their Curiosity in humane Knowledge. 'Tis the Creator who teacheth Truth, who instructs in a Moment the Heart of the humble ones, and makes them know*
much

* *St. Matt.* xi. 25. † *Jer.* ix. 23.

much more of the Mysteries of our Faith, yea, and of the Divine Nature, than if they had reasoned upon them for a great Tract of Years.

On this Account it was that he carefully avoided answering such curious Questions, as serv'd only to perplex the Understanding and dry up the Heart. But when his Superiors obliged him to give his Thoughts plainly of such Difficulties as they propos'd in their Conferences with him, he answer'd them with so great Accuracy and Pointedness, that there needed no further Reply.

This is what a great many learned Men both of the Secular and Regular Order have observed, when they necessarily put it on him to answer them. And 'tis likewise a judicious Reflection which a renown'd Bishop of France made, when he conversed with Brother Laurence, and what made him say in his Favour, *That he was worthy of GOD's speaking to him interiorly, and disclosing to him His Mysteries; adding, That the Greatness and Purity of his Love for GOD made him live before hand on Earth like one of the Blessed.*

He ascended to GOD by the Knowledge of the Creatures, being well perswaded that the Books of the most famous Academists teach us but very little in Comparison of the great Book of Nature, when we do but study it as we ought: And his Soul being touched by the Diversity of the various Parts that compose it, he was carried to GOD so powerfully, that nothing was able to separate it from Him. He observ'd in all the Wonders of

C 2

Nature,

20 *The Life of Nicolas Herman.*

Nature, different Strokes of the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of the Creator; which led him to Admiration, and raised his Heart to such Transports of Love and Joy, that he cried out with the Prophet, † *Many, O LORD my GOD, are thy wonderfull Works which thou hast done, and thy Thoughts which are to us ward: They cannot be reckoned up in Order unto thee. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbred.*

He wrote of Things that were so sublime and delicate, both as to the Perfections of GOD and the ineffable Communications of His Love with the Soul, that they who have seen some of the Leaves that were torn from his Writings (which they got after a great deal of Importunity. and on Condition of returning them quickly) were so charm'd and edified, that the spoke of 'em with Surprise and Admiration. But notwithstanding all the Care he took to conceal his Papers, we have made a Collection of some Fragments of them, which make us regret the Loss of the rest: And indeed if we may judge of what he has done and wrote this Way, by the Specimen we have in his Letters and Maxims, we have very good Reason to believe (as he himself told one of his Friends) that his little Performances were properly speaking nothing but * *the Effusions of the Holy Ghost and the Productions*

† Psal. xl. 5. * This needs not appear incredible nor extraordinary, if we do but consult these following Passages of Scripture, which are applicable not to the Apostles, but to Christians in general. Ephes. ii. 22. iii. 19. 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13. iii. 14. vi. 19. with many others.

ductions of his Love. He committed his Thoughts sometimes to Writing ; but when he compared what he had wrote with what he found interiorly, he thought it so low, and so far from the Sentiments he had of the Greatness and Goodness of GOD, that he found himself very often obliged to tear them in Pieces that Moment. He destroyed them the more willingly, that he wrote them down only to give some Liberty to his Spirit, and to dilate his Heart and his Breast, which were too narrow and confin'd to keep in the divine Fire which burnt within and made him suffer. Just like a full Bason, which when it can hold the Water no longer, runs over ; or rather like some subterraneous Ground, which when it cannot stop the Violence of the Flame that's pent up within it, is forced to allow it's bursting out.

One of the principal Vertues that excelled in *Brother Laurence* was *Faith*. For as the just Man lives by this Theological Vertue, it was the Life and Food of his Soul, and so improved his Mind, that he made visibly great Progress in the interior Life. It was this admirable Vertue that made him contemn and trample on the World, and rendred it so contemptible in his Eyes, that he thought it unworthy to take up the least Room in his Heart. It was *Faith* that led him to GOD, and which raised him so far above all earthly Things, that it made him seek his Happiness solely in the Possession of Him. She was his great Mistress, and taught him more than all the

the Books of the World put together could do

It was *Faith* which gave him this high Esteem for GOD, and the great Veneration he had for Holy Mysteries, especially for the august and venerable Sacrament of the Altar, where the Son of GOD resides as a King, and whom he loved so affectionately, that he spent many Hours both by Day and Night at His Feet, and paid Him the divine Homage and Adoration that were due to Him. This likewise gave him a great Respect for the *Word of GOD*, for the Church and her Holy Orders, and for his Superiors, whom he obeyed as the *Vicegerents of Jesus Christ*. In a word, he was so firmly perswaded of the Truth of what *Faith* proposes to us, that he often said, *All the fine and beautifull Discourses I hear of GOD, and what I can say or feel of Him myself, can never satisfy me: For GOD being infinite in His Perfections, He is consequently ineffable, and there are no Expressions that have Life and Energy enough to give me a perfect Idea of His Greatness.* 'Tis *Faith* that discovers Him to me, and that makes me know Him such as He is. I learn more of Him by the Means of this, in a little Time, than I should do for many Years in the Schools. Then crying out, he said. O *Faith!* O *Faith!* O admirable *Virtue* which enlightens the Mind of Man. and leads him to the Knowledge of his Creator! O *amiable Virtue!* How little art thou known, and yet less practis'd tho' the Knowledge of thee be so glorious and profitable.

From

From this lively Faith there sprang up in his Soul a Firmness of *Hope* in the Mercy and Goodness of GOD, a filial Confidence in His Providence, and a total and universal *Abandon* of himself into His Hands, without any anxious Care of what should become of him after Death; as we shall see more fully afterwards, when we come to speak of the Sentiments he had in his last Sickness. During the most part of his Life, he was not satisfied barely to rely on the Grace of GOD, and the Mercies of *Jesus Christ*, for his Salvation; but in a manner forgetting himself, and all that concerned him, he threw himself (as the Prophet speaks) headlong upon the Arms of His infinite Mercy. The more Things appear'd desperate to him, the more he hoped: Like a Rock beaten with the Waves of the Sea, which becomes more immoveable by Storms; just so it was with him, as we have already remarked of those internal Troubles which GOD sent upon him, that He might make a Trial of his Fidelity, when he first entred upon a religious Life. If, according to St *Augustine's* Sentiment, the Measure of Hope be in proportion to the Measure of Grace; What shall we think of that which GOD communicated to *Brother Laurence*? As the Scripture saith, he hoped even against Hope. Accordingly he said, *That the greatest Glory we could give to GOD, was intirely to distrust and suspect our own Strength, and to confide altogether in His Protection*; because hereby we make a sincere Acknowledgment of our own Weakness, and

24 *The Life of Nicolas Herman.*

a true Confession of the Almighty Power of the Creator

As *Charity* is the Queen and Soul of all other Vertues, which by a necessary Consequence stamps on 'em all their Value and Merit We need not wonder tho' the Vertues which *Brother Laurence* posses'd were perfect, because the Love of GOD abounded so much in his Heart, that it changed (as *St. Bernard* speaks) all his Affections to the Side of this divine Object. If *Faith* then made him consider GOD as the sovereign Truth, and if *Hope* made him contemplate Him as his last End and consummate Happiness; we may easily see, that *Charity* made him regard GOD as the most perfect of all Beings, or, to speak more properly, as Perfection itself. He was far from loving GOD from the Principle of *Self-Interest* and from mercenary Views. No; his Charity was so disinterested, that he would have loved GOD, tho' there had been no Sufferings on the one hand to terrify him, nor on the other any Reward to hope for; desiring nothing but the Praise and Glory of GOD, and making all his Happiness consist in accomplishing His holy Will: as we shall see he did in the Extremity of his Sickness, where he enjoyed such a Freedom of Spirit to the very last, that he express'd the Sentiments of his Heart as easily as if he had been in perfect Health.

The Purity of his *Love* was so great, that he wish'd, had it been possible. GOD might not have taken any Notice of these Actions which
he

he did for His Service, that so he might have done them solely for His Glory, and without any Reflection upon himself as the Author of them. He complained however in an affectionate Manner, and told his Friends, That GOD allowed nothing of what he did to escape without rewarding him for it immediately a *hundred-fold* ; giving him often such delicious and great Sensations of his Godhead, that he was sometimes as it were overwhelmed with them, and made him say in his ordinary Way, 'Tis too much, O LORD ! *this is too much for me. Vouchsafe, if Thou pleasest, such Favours and Consolations on Sinners, and on such as know Thee not, that by this they may be drawn to Thy Service As for me who have the Happiness to know Thee by Faith, I think this should satisfy me : But because I can refuse nothing from so rich and liberal a Hand as Thine, I accept, O my GOD, of all the Favours Thou dost me Let it please Thee, if it be Thy Will, that when I have received them, I return them such as Thou hast given 'em me : For Thou knowest abundantly well, that 'tis not Thy Gifts I seek and desire, but Thyself only, and that nothing less can satisfy me.*

This Purity of Love and Disinterestedness served only to set his Heart more on Fire, and to increase the Flame of this divine Love, whose Sparks flash'd out sometimes in his Exterior. And indeed tho' he used all his Efforts to stop the vast Impetuosity of that sacred Love which burnt within him, it was frequently not in his Power to keep it from sallying out, and often against his Inclination,

D

you

you might have seen his very Countenance inflam'd. But when he was in private, he let this Flame act in it's full Force, and then he cried to GOD, *Dilate, O LORD, and extend the Faculties of my Soul, that I may give more Room to Thy Love; or, at least, support me by Thy Almighty Goodness, otherwise I shall be consumed by the Flames of Thy Charity.*

He said often to GOD, in the Conversations he had with his Brethren, when he bewailed the Time he had lost in his Youth; *O loving Kindness so ancient and so new, I have been too late of loving Thee — Do not so my Brethren; ye are young, but learn and profit from the sincere Confession I make to you, how little Care I have taken to employ my younger Days in the Service of GOD. Consecrate all your's to His Love. As for me, had I known Him sooner, and had one told me the things I communicate to you at present, I would never have so long delayed loving Him. Believe me, and reckon that all the Time is lost that's not employed in loving GOD.*

As the Love of GOD and the Love of our Neighbour is only the same Habit, do but judge of the Charity he had to his Neighbour from that of his Love to GOD. And being well perswaded of what our Saviour says in the Gospel, that *the smallest Service we do to the least of his Brethren, is done to himself*; He was particularly carefull to serve them in all the Offices of his State, especially when he was employed in the Kitchen, where he provided what was necessary for the Subsistence of the Religious, agreeably to the Poverty of their State,

State, and took as great Delight to please them and do for them, as if they had been Angels. A Charity he inspir'd all those with who succeeded him in this Office.

He assisted the Poor in their Straits as much as possibly he could. He comforted them in their Afflictions, assisted them with his Advice, and excited them to labour for Heaven, at the same Time they were gaining their daily Bread. And to say all in few Words, he did his Neighbour all the Good was in his Power, and never ill to any Man: And after the Apostle's Example, * he made himself all Things to all Men, that he might gain all to GOD.

As according to St Paul's Saying, † *Charity* is patient, conquers all Difficulties, and suffers all, for the Love of Him for whose Sake it loves. Can we doubt of *Brother Laurence's* *Patience* in his Infirmities, who loved GOD so perfectly? And truly if, according to the Sentiment of the same Apostle, *Patience* has such a noble Connection with *Charity*, that as this is the *Bond of Perfection*, so the other is a *perfect Work*; Need we any more to convince us of the perfect State to which he exalted his Servant? This is now what we proceed to show in the Practice of these two Vertues, during the most sensible Maladies wherewith it pleased GOD to afflict him. For not to mention here a kind of Sciatick Gout, which made him lame, and afflicted him for the

D 2

Space

* 1 Cor. ix. 22. † 1 Cor. xiii. 4, &c.

Space of twenty five Years ; and which afterwards degenerating into an Ulcer on his Leg, occasioned most violent and sharp Pains : I shall confine my self chiefly to three sore Maladies which GOD sent on him the last Years of his Life, to prepare him for Death, and render him worthy of the great Recompence He appointed for him.

The two first reduced him to Extremity ; but he suffered them with an admirable *Patience*, and preserved amidst his Sufferings the same Equality of Mind, which he had in the most vigorous State of Health. In the first, he shew'd some Desire for Death : For as he was discoursing with his Physician, and was sensible of the Fever's being abated, he said to him, *Ah ! Sir, your Remedies succeed too well with me. You have retarded my Happiness.* In the second Malady, he appeared to have no manner of Desire, but was altogether indifferent about Life or Death ; perfectly resign'd to the Will of GOD, and desired nothing but what it shou'd please His holy Providence to order for him.

But in the third, which separated his Soul from his Body, to reunite it to it's well-beloved in Heaven ; I can say, that he discovered a Constancy, a Resignation, and a Joy, that were altogether extraordinary. He had of a long Time looked for this happy Moment ; and when it came, his Soul was overjoyed. The View of *Death*, which to the most of Men is very terrible, and strikes even the hardiest People with the utmost Consternation
and

and Horror, did not in the least affright him. He looked on it with a stay'd Eye, and it may even be said, that he dar'd it: For having seen a poor little Bed they had got for him, one of his Friends said, You have done with it *Brother Laurence*, you must be going. 'Tis very true (says he) *that's my Death-bed, but there's one will very soon follow me that's not expecting it*: which actually happened as he said. For tho' that Brother was then in perfect Health, he fell sick the next Day, and died the very same Day on which *Brother Laurence* was buried, and on *Wednesday* following was laid in the same Grave with him. This looked as if that Charity which had united these two good Brethren in their Life, would not suffer their being separated even at Death; for at that Time there could be no other Ground got in the common Burying place.

He told several People some four or five Months before, That he was to die before the End of *February*. He wrote two Letters, at fifteen Days distance, to a religious Lady, of the *Holy Sacrament*, concluding his First with these Words, *Farewell. I hope to see Him very soon.* And in the Second, dated the 6th of *February*, which was two Days before he fell sick, he had these Words, *Adieu. I hope in His Mercy to have the great Happiness of seeing Him in a few Days.*

The same Day on which he took his Bed, he told a Religious that was one of his intimate Friends, *That his Sickness would not be tedious, and that he would very soon leave this World,*

World. He was so sure of the Day of his Death, that the next Day, which was *Friday*, he spoke more peremptorily of it, and told one of the Society, *That he would die on the Monday following* ; which accordingly happened.

But let us return to the Resolution and Constancy he discovered in his Sickness, before we take Notice of the Circumstances of his Death and his last Sentiments. The only Desire then that he had, was to suffer somewhat for the Love of GOD, which made him repeat what he had so often said in his Life, *That he had only one Uneasiness, which was, That he did not suffer ; That he supported himself with the Thoughts of a * middle State, and that there at least he would meet with Sufferings suitable to his State and Disposition.* But having found a favourable Occasion for it in this Life, he embrac'd it : For he caus'd them on purpose turn him to the right Side, knowing that this Situation would be extremly painfull ; and there he lay, to satisfy the ardent Desire he had to suffer. A Brother that sat with him, offered to make him easier ; but he answered him twice, *I thank you my dear Brother ; I beseech you let me suffer a little for the Love of GOD.* In this painfull Posture he said fervently, *O my GOD I adore Thee in my Infirmities ; 'Tis now, O LORD, that I will suffer something for Thee : In a good Time ; let it be so ; may I suffer*

* The Distinction of Paradise (the Receptacle of holy Souls after Death) from the third Heaven, seems to have firm Ground in the New Testament. Vid. Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3, 4. and Grot. in loca.

fer and die with Thee. Then he often repeated these Words of the 51. Psal. *Create in me a clean Heart, O GOD — Cast me not away from thy Presence — Restore to me the Joy of thy Salvation, &c.* The Pains which he felt in this Situation, from a Stitch he had in his right Side, occasioned by a Pleurisy, were so terrible, that he must undoubtedly have died, had not the Overseer of the Infirmary, who came in very seasonably and noticed it, turn'd him quickly to his other Side; and by this Means gave him a freer Breathing.

He was so passionately fond of Sufferings, that they were his greatest Cordials. There was not the least Chagrine about him, no not for a Moment, in his most violent Illness. There was a Joy appeared not only in his Face, but in his very way of speaking; which obliged the Religious who came to visit him, to ask him, If he really suffered any thing? *Pardon me (says he) I do suffer. The Stitch I have in my Side hurts me, but my Mind is content.* But Brother (said they) should it please GOD you suffered those Pains for the Space of ten Years, would you be satisfied? *I would (answered he) not only for such a Number of Years, but did it please GOD to afflict me in this manner to the Day of Judgment, I would cheerfully consent to it; and I would moreover hope that He would vouchsafe me His Grace still to be content.* Thus we see what Patience Brother Laurence had both in the Beginning and Progress of his Sickness, which lasted only four Days.

The Hour of his Departure out of this World drawing nigh, he redoubled his Fervour. His *Faith* became more lively, his *Hope* stronger, and his *Charity* more ardent. One may judge of the Vigour of his Faith, by his frequent Exclamations; which shew'd the great Esteem he had for this Vertue. *O Faith! Faith!* (said he) expressing it's Excellency better this way than if he had said a great deal more of it. Thus penetrated with the Greatness, and enlightned with the Light of Faith, he ador'd GOD incessantly, and said, That this Adoration was natural to him: And he said once to one of the Religious, That he no more barely *believed* the Residence of GOD in his Soul, but that by the means of this luminous Faith he *saw* somewhat already of this intimate Presence.

The Firmness of his Hope appear'd no less: His Resolution was so great, even in that Passage where every Thing is so frightfull, that he told one of his Friends who interrogated him on this Article, † *That he was neither afraid of Death, Hell, nor the Judgments of GOD, nor the Efforts of the Devil; That he actually found him making his Attacks upon him, but that he mock'd him, and bade him Defiance.* They were much delighted to hear him speak of Things that were so edifying, and so proceeded to ask him some more Questions. They asked him, If he knew what a terrible Thing it was to fall into the Hands of a living GOD, because

† Psal. xliii. 4.

because no Man whatever knows assuredly, whether he deserves Love or Hatred? *I agree with you (says he) but I would not desire to know it, for I should be afraid there was a Vanity in it.*

He carried his Resignation so far, that forgetting himself, and regarding GOD only, and the accomplishing His Will, he said, *Yea, was it possible, as it is not, that one could love GOD in Hell, and that he would put me there, I should not be anxiously concerned; for He would be with me, and His Presence would be a Paradise. I have abandoned my self to Him; He will do with me what pleaseth Him.*

If he loved GOD so much in his Life, he did it no less at his Death. He performed continual Acts of Love; and a Religious having asked him, If he loved GOD with the full Extent of his Heart? He answered him, *Ah! did I know that my Heart loved not GOD, I would immediately pluck it out.* His Illness increasing visibly, they brought him all the Sacraments, which he received joyfully. He kept his Judgment intire and sound to the very last.

Tho' they did not leave him for a Moment either by Day or Night, having all the Assistance he could possibly expect from the Charity of his Brethren; yet they thought fit to keep him a little quiet, that he might have his own serious Reflections, and improve the last Moments of Life, which are so precious, and think of the great Favour that GOD vouchsafed him, in allowing him all the Sa-

E

craments;

34 *The Life of Nicolas Herman.*

craments; which he employed to the best Purposes, demanding of GOD a final Perseverance in his Love. A Religious having asked him, What he was doing, and whereon his Mind was employed? *I am doing* (says he) *what I shall do to all Eternity; I'm blessing GOD, I'm praising GOD, I'm adoring and loving Him with all my Heart. 'Tis our whole Work, my Brethren, to adore GOD and to love Him, without being anxious about any thing else.*

Another of the Society having recommended himself to his Prayers, and importun'd him to beg of GOD, in his Behalf, the true Spirit of Prayer: He told him, *That in order to attain this Disposition, he must co-operate with GOD, and labour all he could to render himself worthy of it.* These were the last Words he spoke. The next Day, which was Monday, the 12th of February 1691, about Nine in the Morning, died Brother Laurence of the Resurrection, in the Embraces of GOD. He had at his Death no manner of Agony nor Convulsion, but kept his Senses to the very last, and resign'd his Soul to Him who gave it, with Peace and Tranquillity, like a Person in Sleep.

Thus was his Death like a sweet Sleep, which carried him from this miserable Life to a blessed Eternity. For in short, if we can guess at the Consequences of Death, by the holy Actions that go before it; What must we think of Brother Laurence, who left this World loaded with good Works and pious Dispositions? 'Tis easy then to conclude, and
we

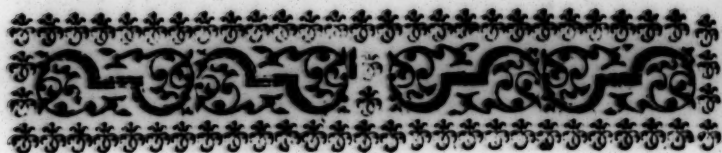
we may presume without Flattery, that his Death was *precious in GOD's Sight*, and very quickly followed with a Reward; That his Lot is among the Saints; That now he is invested with Glory; That his *Faith* is recompensed with clear Vision, his *Hope* with Possession, and his *Charity* with a consummate Love.

Here ends the Life.



E a

T H E



T H E
MANNERS
O F
Nicolas Herman.

I Am now to write what I have my self heard and seen of *the Manners of Brother Laurence, a bare-footed Carmelite*, who died in the Convent of *Paris* about two Years ago, whose Memory is blessed.

A Person who chose to end his Days in the meanest Station in the House of GOD, rather than possess the first Seat among Sinners; who preferr'd the Cross and the Reproach of *Jesus Christ*, to the vain Delights and Pride of *Egypt*; desired that I might communicate to such Souls as were rescued from the Love of this present World, what he knew I had collected of *Brother Laurence's Sentiments*; I obey'd him with Pleasure: And tho' there's already
an

an *Encomium* passed on the Letters of this good Brother, yet 'tis my Opinion, that what we have preserved of this good Man's Writings, cannot be too much divulged and commended.

I thought it would be very usefull to let the World see in his Person an excellent Model of a solid Piety, in a Time especially when almost all Mankind place Vertue where it is not, and take very false Ways to come at it.

Brother Laurence shall speak for himself. I'll present him to you in his own Words in the very Conversations I have had with him, which I wrote down immediately as I had left him. None can describe the Saints so well as they do themselves. The Confessions, for Example, and the Letters of St. *Augustine*, give a much better Description of him, and a more natural one, than what otherwise could have been contrived to represent him. Just so, nothing can give the World such an exact Knowledge of this Servant of GOD, whose Vertues I am now to propose and set before you, than what he himself hath spoken in the Simplicity of his Heart.

Brother Laurence's Vertue did not at all make him wild or uncouth. He had an open entertaining Manner, which encouraged People to converse with him, and make what Discoveries they pleased to him; nay, and instantly convinced them that they had found out a true Friend. Accordingly when he knew these with whom he had any Business, he conversed

38 *The Manners of Nicolas Herman.*

versed with them freely, and with a great deal of Goodness. What he said was simple, but always just and full of Sense. Through a heavy kind of external Appearance, one might have discovered a singular *Prudence*, and a certain *Freedom* of Spirit, much above the ordinary Capacity of a poor *Lay-Brother*, attended with a *Penetration*, which by far exceeded what could have been expected. When he asked Alms, he shew'd a *Genius* capable of carrying on and advising Matters of the highest Importance. And this is in short what appeared in the Exterior of *Brother Laurence*.

He has himself described his own Dispositions, and his interior Conduct in the Conferences I am now to present you with. His Conversion began (as you'll see by and by) from the high Idea he conceived of the Power and Wisdom of GOD ; which he cultivated carefully, by a great Fidelity to banish and dislodge every other Thought.

Now as this first Knowledge of GOD was really the *Principle* of all the Perfection to which *Brother Laurence* attained afterwards, 'tis proper to stop here a little, and reflect what his Conduct was, as founded on it.

Faith was the only Light he used, not only for knowing GOD at first, but never afterwards did he employ any thing but this for his Instruction and Conduct in all the Ways of GOD. He often told me, *That whatever he heard others say, whatever he found in Books, or wrote himself, appeared to him faint and languid, in comparison of what Faith discovered to him of*
the

The Manners of Nicolas Herman. 39

the Grandeurs of GOD and of Jesus Christ. He alone (said he) is capable of making Himself be known, such as He really is. We search in Reasonings and in Sciences as in a bad Copy, what we neglect to see in an excellent Original. GOD delineates Himself in the Ground of our Souls, and yet we will not see Him there. We leave Him for Trifles, and disdain to converse with our King who is always present in us.

'Tis too pitifull a Way (added Brother Laurence) to love GOD and to know Him by what Books tell us of Him, or by what we feel of Him in our Soul by some small Impressions of Devotion, or by any other such Light: We must quicken our Faith, and by it's Means raise our selves above all our own Sentiments, to adore GOD and Jesus Christ in all Their divine Perfections, such as they are in themselves. This way of Faith is the Spirit of the Church, and 'tis sufficient to bring us to a high Degree of Perfection.

Not only did he contemplate GOD present by Faith in his Soul, but likewise in every thing that he saw, and in what happened to him, he instantly lifted up his Mind, and passed from the Creature to the Creator.

A Tree which he saw withered in the Winter, raised his Soul immediately to GOD, and affected him with such a sublime Sense and Knowledge of Him, that it remained with him as strong and lively forty Years after, as when he received it at first. Thus he behaved on all Occasions, using Things visible to carry him to what were invisible and eternal.

On

40 *The Manners of Nicolas Herman.*

On the same Account it was, that in his small Reading he preferred the Gospel to all other Books, because there he found his Faith more purely and simply nourished by *Jesus Christ's* own Words.

It was by a Fidelity to cultivate in his Heart this high *Presence of GOD* considered by Faith, that *Brother Laurence* began. He entertained himself with continual Acts of Adoration, of Love, and of invoking the Assistance of our LORD in whatever he had to do. He thanked GOD when he had done it; he asked Forgiveness for his Negligencies, and *acknowledged them* (as he said) *without pleading with GOD*. And as these Acts were mixed and interwoven with his daily Labour, and that these very Occupations furnished him with Subject-matter for them, he performed them with the greater Ease; and they were so far from hindring his Business, that they helped him to do it well.

He confessed however, that he found some Trouble in the Beginning; and that some considerable Time would have passed wherein he had forgotten this Exercise, but that after having humbly acknowledged his Fault, he entred again upon it without any Trouble.

Sometimes a Crowd of extravagant Thoughts violently possessed the Place of his GOD; and all he did was to dissipate them calmly and easily, and so return to his ordinary Conversation. In that, *his Fidelity* deserved to be rewarded by a continual Remembrance of GOD. His different and multiplied
Acts

The Manners of Nicolas Herman. 41

Acts were all changed into a simple * View or Intuition, into an enlightned Love and an uninterrupted Enjoyment. *The Time of Action* (said he) *is not different from that of Prayer.* I enjoy GOD with as great Tranquillity in the Hurry of my Kitchen, where frequently many People call upon me at the same Time for different Things, as if I was on my Knees at the Holy Sacrament. My Faith even becomes so enlightned, that I have imagined it was lost. I have thought that the Curtain of Obscurity was removed, and that the bright and endless Day of the other Life began to dawn. To such Heights of Devotion did our good Brother arrive, by his Fidelity in rejecting and throwing out of his Mind every foreign Thought, that he might enjoy a continual Conversation with GOD: And in end, he attained such a Freedom this Way, that he said, *It was in a manner impossible for him to turn away his Thoughts from GOD, and employ them on any thing else.*

You'll find in his Conversations an important Observation on this Subject, when he saith, That the Presence of GOD should be entertained rather by Love and by the Heart, than by the Understanding or much Reasoning. *In the Way of GOD* (says he) *Reflections or Thoughts go for nothing; Love does all.*

F

Nor

* This is to be understood of the highest Degree of Contemplation, when the Heart, as the Psalmist speaks, is fixed, and from particular and distinct Petitions in Prayer, is swallowed up into one undivided Act of Adoration, Love or Praise; at other Times, into a View of the Greatness, Goodness, or other Perfections of the Deity, according to the then Degree of the Soul's Perfection or spiritual Taste.

42 *The Manners of Nicolas Herman.*

Nor is it any ways necessary (as he goes on) to be concerned with great Matters. [I describe here a poor Lay-brother in the Kitchin, and must be allowed to use his own Words] I put my little Egg-cake into the Frying-pan for the Love of GOD: When that's done, and if I have nothing else to call me, I prostrate my self on the Ground, and I adore my GOD who assists me in every Thing by His Grace; after which, I rise up more contented than a King. When I can do nothing else, 'tis enough to me to lift up but a Straw for the Love of GOD.

Men seek after stated Ways and Methods by which they may learn how to love GOD, and they would come at it by I know not how many different Practices, and they are much troubled how to abide in the Presence of GOD, by the various Means they use in order to it. But is it not the righter and shorter Way too, to do all for the Love of GOD, to use all the Offices of one's State to signify this Love, and to entertain His Presence in us by this Fellowship of our Heart with Him? We need no Subtilty nor Mystery in this: We should go to GOD simply and honestly. I preserve religiously here his own ordinary Expressions.

We are not however to think, that we do enough for the Love of GOD, when we offer Him our Works, call for His Assistance, and produce Acts of His Love: For our Brother did not attain by these Things to the Perfection of Love, but because from the very Beginning he was carefull to do nothing that might displease GOD, renounced every thing
else

else but GOD, and had intirely forgotten himself.

From my entring into Religion (these are his own Words) I have not anxiously troubled my self about Vertue, nor my own Salvation After having given All to GOD in Satisfaction for my Sins, and renounced for His Love every thing that's not Himself; I believed I had nothing more to do all my Life, but to live as if there was none but GOD and my self in the World.

Thus it was Brother Laurence began by what was most perfect, in renouncing all for GOD, and in doing every thing for His Love He intirely forgot himself. He never any more thought on Heaven or Hell, or his past Sins, nor on those he daily committed, after having once asked GOD's Forgiveness of them. He made no Reflection upon his Confessions, but entred into a perfect Peace when he confessed his Sins to GOD, and could do no more: After this (as he said) he *resign'd himself to GOD, for Life and for Death, for Time and Eternity.*

We are made for GOD alone. and He cannot take it amiss that we forsake our selves and converse with Him. We will see in Him better what we want, than in our selves by all our Reflections; and 'tis only the Remains of Self-love, which, under the appearance of our Perfection, ties us down to our selves, and keeps us from mounting up to GOD. This Brother said, That in the greatest Pains he had endured for four Years, and so great they were, that it was not in the Power of all the Men on Earth to perswade him out of

44 *The Manners of Nicolas Herman.*

the Fancy, † *that he would be damn'd*, he had never altered his first Resolution, but that, without reflecting what should become of him, or minding his Sufferings (as all other afflicted Souls do) he comforted himself with this, saying, *Happen what will, I shall at least do all my Actions, during the Remainder of my Life, for the Love of GOD.* And thus forgetting himself, he was very willing to lose himself for GOD, in which he found his Account.

A Love to the Will of GOD had possessed in him the same Attachment that Men generally have to their own. In whatever happened to him, he saw nothing but the Order of GOD; and this kept him in a continual Peace. When they told him of any great Lewdness that came to pass in the World; instead of being surprized at it, he wondred, on the contrary, it was no greater, considering the Wickedness the Sinner was capable of. But he instantly litted up his Soul to GOD, and knowing that He could remedy it, and that moreover He permitted these Evils, for Reasons that were very just and conducive to the general Order of His Conduct towards Mankind, he prayed for these Sinners, and troubled himself no more about 'em, but returned to his former State of Tranquillity.

I told him one Day without any Introduction, That a Matter of great Consequence, which

† Read and consider Psal. lxxxviii. throughout.

which he had very much at Heart. and wherein he had taken a good deal of Pains, could not be executed, and that they were going to take a quite contrary Resolution. To which he returned no other Answer but this, *We must believe that they who have determined so have had good Reasons for so doing, it remains now that they execute it, and say no more of it.* He did so indeed himself; and tho' very often he had an Occasion afterwards to mention it, yet he never opened his Mouth on that Subject.

† A Person of great Merit having been to visit Brother Laurence in his Sickness, asked him, *Which he would choose, if GOD should put it in his Offer, either to be spared in Life for some Time to raise and exalt His Merit, or immediately be received into Heaven?* The good Brother, without any Hesitation, answered. *That he left that Choice to GOD; and as for himself, he had nothing else to do but to wait in Peace till it should please GOD to shew him what was His Will*

This Disposition led him to so great an Indifference about every thing, and to such an intire Freedom, that it came very nigh to that of the Blessed. He was of no Party. One could discover no Byass nor Inclination about him

The natural Attachment that People, even in the best and most religious Places. have for their Country, had not at all prepossess'd him. He was equally beloved by Persons of opposite

† The late renowned Archbishop of Cambray.

46 *The Manners of Nicolas Herman.*

site Humours. He wish'd always and will'd what was right, without any respect to the Persons, by whom, or for whom it was done. As a Citizen of Heaven, nothing stopt him on Earth. His Views were not confined to the Limits of Time; and by long contemplating Him who is eternal, he was himself become like Him.

Every Thing was equal to him, every Place, every Employment. The good Brother found GOD every where. He had no immoderate Desire for Retirement, because he found in his ordinary Occupations the same GOD whom he could love and adore, as well as in the deepest Solitude.

The only Mean he used by which to go to GOD, was to *do every Thing for His Love*, and therefore it was indifferent to him, whether he was employed in this or the other Thing, provided that he did it for GOD. It was GOD, and not the Action, which he regarded. He knew that the more opposite any Thing he did was to his natural Inclination, so much the more meritorious was the Love which made him offer it to GOD; that the smallness of the Thing did not take from the Value of his Oblation, because GOD wants nothing, and considers nothing in our Works but the Love which accompanies them.

Another Character of *Brother Laurence* was, that of an extraordinary Firmness of Mind, which in another kind of Life, one would have called *Intrepidity*; which shew'd him to have a great Soul, and raised above the Fear and Hope of every other Thing that was not
GOD,

GOD. He admired nothing, he was surprised at nothing, and he dreaded nothing. This Stability of Soul in him proceeded from the same Source with his other Vertues. The high Idea he had of GOD represented Him to him such as He really is, as the sovereign Equity and infinite Goodness; and resting on these, he was sure GOD would not deceive him, and that he would always do him good, since for his Part he was resolved never to displease GOD, but to do and suffer all for His Love.

I asked him one Day, Who was his Director? He told me, *He had none, and that he believed he needed none, because the Rule and Office he had in Religion marked out to him what he had to do as to external Things, as the Gospel did the Obligation he lay under to love GOD with all his Heart: That knowing this, a Director seemed to be of no Use to him, but that he had great need of a Confessor to absolve him from his Sins.*

They who observe no other Conduct in the spiritual Life but their own particular Dispositions and Sentiments, who believe they have nothing of greater Importance to do but to examine if they have any Devotion or not, can have no Stability nor any certain Rule, because these Things change continually, either by our own Negligence, or by the Order of GOD, who varies His Gifts and His Conduct towards us according to our Necessities.

The good Brother on the other hand being *steadfast* in the Way of Faith, which changeth not, was always consistent with himself, because

48 *The Manners of Nicolas Herman.*

cause his whole Study was to accomplish the Duties of the Place which GOD assigned him, reckoning nothing commendable or praiseworthy but the Vertues of his State. Instead of watching his own Dispositions, and examining the Way in which he walked, he considered only GOD as the great End of his Race, marching on with full Speed towards Him for the Practice of Righteousness, Charity and Humility, and applying himself rather to do than to reflect on what he did.

The Devotion of *Brother Laurence* being so solidly founded, was not liable to Visions nor other extraordinary Things. He was persuaded that such of these as were real, were often the Signs of Weakness in a Soul, which would be satisfied with GOD's Gifts rather than with Himself. And from the Time he was a Novice, there was nothing of these Things in his Conduct, at least he mentioned nothing of them to his most intimate Friends. He walked during the whole Course of his Life in the Paths of the Saints, namely, by the sure Way of Faith. Nor did he wander out of the common Road which leads to Salvation by such Exercises as have been authorised at all Times in the Church, by the Practice of good Works and the Vertues of his State. He suspected every Thing else. His great Judgment, and the Light that he derived from the Simplicity of his Faith, kept him clear of all these Rocks which cast up in the Way of the Spirit, and on which so many Souls in these Days are shipwrack'd, when they

they addict themselves to the Love of Novelty, to their own Imagination, to Curiosity, and to humane Conduct.

When one seeks after nothing but GOD, he easily avoids all these Dangers. In Matters of Religion, whatever appears new, ought to be suspected. This so necessary a Vertue is not of the Number of these Things which are perfected through Course of Time ; on the contrary, it hath had all it's Perfection in it's first Source and Rise For *Jesus Christ* hath taught his Church all that was necessary, either by himself or his Spirit speaking by the Apostles ; and here it is we must return, if we would be sure of our Way.

'Tis true, besides this Faith that's written and orally delivered. the Body of *Jesus Christ* subsisting on Earth in the Faithfull, wants a living Interpreter to declare his Will, and in all the Doubts that might happen, to mark out the Way they should follow. This is what our Saviour hath not been wanting in : He hath left us the Church speaking by the Body of her Pastors, to whom he hath given Authority to propose and explain her Doctrine, and to mark out to every one of her Members, in the Rule of Faith, the Way that must save him. The Faith of the Church is this sure Way which keeps the Soul in an intire Peace, and from needing any Thing else, and administers to her all the Consolation she has during her State of Exile.

If Men however, not satisfied with this, will make a Stretch : If from Sentiments and

G

Devotion

50 *The Manners of Nicolas Herman.*

Devotion supported by Faith, they will pass to such as the Church only tolerates in Condescension to the Weakness of her Children : If from the Spirit of Curiosity or Uneasiness, they will resign themselves to the Conduct of any one particular Person who goes out of the common Road ; and if in desiring to follow their own Fancy, they will prefer their own Thoughts to what the Church proposeth ; such Men must be exposed to Danger, and do hereby espouse the Company of all those who bewilder themselves by their own voluntary Illusion.

GOD having spoken by the Patriarchs and Prophets, hath at last spoken to us by His own Son. This SON now instructs us by the Church : The Faith that she teacheth is sure, full and sufficient. Let us all hold to it. This religious Soul hath exactly followed it, and furnisbeth us in his own Person with an excellent Model of the Way that leads to GOD, without wandring from Him.

Nothing represents more a true Christian Philosopher than the Remarks that have been made on the Life and Death of this good Religious. Such formerly were these who truly renounced the World, that they might be wholly employed in improving their Souls in the Knowledge of GOD and His Son *JESUS CHRIST*. They were such religious Men as had the Gospel only for their Rule, and professed the holy Philosophy of the Cross. Thus it is that *St. Clement of Alexandria* describes them to us, in the Seventh Book of his *Stro-*

mata :

mata; and it seems he had in his View such a Man as *Brother Laurence*, when he saith, *That the great Business of a Philosopher* (that's to say, a wise Christian) *is Prayer*. He prays every where, not using many Words, but in secret, and in the Ground of his Soul, and while he is walking, conversing, or at Meat, or reading, or going about his Business. He praises GOD continually, not only in the Morning when he rises, and at Noon, but in all his Actions he glorifies GOD after the Example of the Seraphims we read of in *Isaiah*. The Application he gives to spiritual Things by Prayer, renders him meek, affable and patient, but withall so strict and severe as not to be tempted, giving neither Pleasure nor Sorrow the least Handle against him. The Joy of Contemplation whereon he feeds continually, and yet is not satisfied, prevents his having the least Pleasure in the Things of this World. He dwells by *Charity* with the Lord, tho' his Body be yet on the Earth; and having once by Faith been made Partaker of the Light inaccessible, he has no further Taste of the Things of the World. He is already by Love where he should be, and he *desires nothing*, because he hath the Object of his Desire as much as possible.

He hath no great Occasion to show himself a very daring Person, because nothing in this Life can be uneasy to him, nor capable of turning him away from the Love of GOD. Nor need he be at any great Pains to keep himself tranquil and easy, because he never

52 *The Manners of Nicolas Herman.*

falls into Melancholly and Sadness, but is perswaded that every Thing goes well on. He does not fall out into Wrath, nor does any Thing move him; because he loves GOD, and is wholly turned towards Him. He labours under no Jealousy, because he wants nothing. Nor does he love his Neighbour in the way of common and ordinary Friendship, but he loves the Creator by the Creatures. His Soul is in a settled Condition, exempt from all Changes; and forgetting every thing else, he keeps himself attach'd to GOD only.

Allow me now to give this Description (the finishing Stroke) from the Hand of a great Master, who was more enlightned by an excellent Faith which he had in common with *Brother Laurence*, than from all the Sciences he derived from his Intercourse with *Athens*. It won't then, I hope, be taken amiss, that I rank *Masters* and *Doctors* with a poor *Lay-brother*. especially when in the Simplicity of his Words, we meet with what the greatest Lights of the Church have taught us of the Purity of *Christian Manners*, and what both he and they have derived from *Jesus Christ*, who *hides himself from the wise and prudent, and reveals himself to the little ones*.

There is nothing stronger nor more invincible, says *Gregory Nazianzen*, *Orat. 28*. than true Philosophy. Every Thing yields to the Greatness of a Philosopher. If ye strip him of all earthly Conveniencies, he has Wings to soar upwards and fly to GOD, who only is his Master. You cannot overcome GOD,
nor

nor an Angel, nor a Philosopher. Tho' he be composed of Matter, he is as it were immaterial. He is not confin'd. Tho' he has a Body, he lives on Earth as a Man all over heavenly. He is impassible amidst so many Passions. He allows himself to be overcome in every Thing else but the Greatness of his Courage; and by yielding to others, he actually gets the better of all such as think to eclipse him. He is no more tied to the World nor the Flesh. And

Orat 29 He no further uses the Supports of Life than Necessity obligeth him. He has no interior Commerce but with GOD and himself. His Soul is raised above all sensible Things, and like a well polished Mirrour, it reflects to the Life the divine Images, without any Mixture of what's gross and terrestrial. He daily adds new Lights to what he has already, till at length he arrives to the great Source of all Light; whence the Soul in the next Life can only draw forth to it's full Satisfaction, when the Splendor of Truth shall have dissipated the Obscurity of all intricate and perplexing Questions, and we have actually attain'd to the height of all Felicity.

We commemorate here our Lay-brother, and all such as were of the same Spirit with him.

Tho' Brother Laurence past his Time in Retirement, yet there is not any Person of what Condition soever but may reap great Advantage by what's here represented of his Conduct. He will teach all such as are engaged in
in

54 *The Manners of Nicolas Herman.*

in worldly Affairs, how to address themselves to GOD, and how to demand His Grace to discharge their Duty aright, when they are either managing their Business, conversing with one another, or in the very Throng of their Recreations, They will be stirred up by his Example to thank GOD for all His Mercies, for all the Good He inspires them to do, and to humble themselves before Him for their Misdoings.

This is not a speculative Devotion, and such as can only be practised in Cloisters. No; for every Body is bound to adore GOD, and to love Him: And we cannot as we ought acquit our selves of these two Duties, without entring into a close Fellowship of Heart with GOD, which makes us have Recourse to Him every Moment, as Children do who cannot support themselves without the immediate Assistance of the Mother.

This now is not only not difficult, but easy and necessary for all the World; and 'tis that wherein consists the continual Prayer which * *St Paul* recommends to all Christians. Whosoever does not pray after this manner is neither sensible of his Wants, nor his Incapacity for any thing that's good. He neither knows what he is, nor what GOD is nor the constant Necessity he has for the Grace of *Jesus Christ*

The Affairs and Commerce of the World can never be any good Excuse why a Man should not discharge this Duty. GOD is eve-

ry

* Coloss. iv. 2. 1 Thess. v. 17.

ry where present. We can pray to Him in every Place. We can make our Hearts speak to Him in a thousand Ways, and with but a little *Love* we should not find this uneasy: Such again as have retired from the Noise and Confusion of the World, have still somewhat more to learn from the Conduct of *Brother Laurence*; for as they have got rid of the many Necessities and Decorums of Life, which oppress others with many Cares, nothing can hinder them (as this good Brother did) to renounce every other Thought, but that of doing all their Actions for the Love of GOD, and giving Him, as he said, *All for All*.

The Example of his unlimited Resignation and intire Forgetfulness of all Self Interest, which he carried so far, as † *not to think anxiously any further about his own Salvation*, that he might be wholly conversant with GOD. His Indifference to all kind of external Occupations, his Liberty in spiritual Exercises, cannot miss to be most profitable to all such as have forsaken the World, and the Things of it.

Here end the Manners of Brother Laurence.

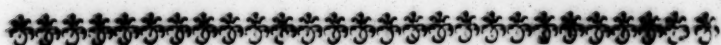
† Some may think this a very ridiculous Piece of Devotion; but at the Bottom it must have been owing to the most consummate Disinterestedness and Resignation of All to GOD; and we have in Scripture an Instance of St. Paul's neglecting himself as much, nay and his very Salvation too, from the Principle of Charity for others, when he said, Rom. ix. 3, *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my Brethren my Kinsmen according to the Flesh*. See that Expression of Moses to the same purpose, Exod. xxxii. 32, *Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their Sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy Book which thou hast written*. The Zeal of these two holy Men, founded on the Principle of Charity and of B. Laurence on that of an absolute and irrevocable Resignation of himself and his All to GOD, is equally to be admired.



CONVERSATIONS

WITH

Nicolas Herman.



first Conberlation,

3d August, 1666.

THEN it was I saw *Brother Laurence* for the first Time. He told me, that GOD had done him a singular Favour in his Conversion, being then but Eighteen Years of Age. That one Day in Winter, as he was looking at a Tree strip'd of it's Leaves, and considering that some Time after they would appear again with the Blossoms, and then the Fruits on it; he received a high Idea
of

of the Providence and Power of GOD, which has never since been effac'd from his Soul. That this View wean'd him intirely from the World, and gave him such a Love for GOD, that he could not say this Love was much increased in above forty Years since GOD vouchsafed him first this Favour.

That he had been Footman to *Mr. Fieubet* the King's Treasurer, and that he was a great Dunce, that broke every Thing.

That he had desired to be received into a Monastery. thinking they would torment and gall him for his Dullness and the Faults he should commit, and by this Means he should have an Opportunity to sacrifice his Life and his Satisfaction to GOD: But that after all, GOD had disappointed him, having met with nothing since he commenced Religious, but a great deal of Pleasure; and that this made him often say to GOD, *Thou hast disappointed me*

That we should establish our selves in a Sense of the Presence of GOD, by continually conversing with Him. That it was a shameful Thing to quit his Company to think of Trifles and Fooleries.

That we should nourish our Souls with a high Idea of GOD; and from so doing, we would conceive vast Delight in being always with Him.

That we should *quicken our Faith*. That it was a lamentable thing we had so little Faith; and that instead of taking this for our Rule and Conduct, we should amuse ourselves with

little Pieces of Devotion, which chang'd daily. *That this Way of Faith was the Spirit of the Church*, and that it was sufficient for our attaining a high Degree of Perfection.

That we ought to give ourselves wholly and in pure abandon to GOD, both for the temporal and spiritual Part, and be wholly delighted in doing His Will, whether He lead us to Himself in the way of Sufferings or Consolations, and that every thing should be equal to him who is truly relign'd. That we ought to be faithfull even during these † Aridities by which GOD proves our Love to Him; That *then* was the Time for us to exercise good Acts of Resignation and Abandon, one whereof would very often much promote our spiritual Progress.

That as for the Miseries and Sins he heard them daily speaking of; instead of wondring at them, he was on the contrary astonished there were no more such Doings, considering the Malice the Sinner was capable of: That he prayed for him. But knowing that GOD could remedy the Mischiefs they did when He pleased, he troubled himself no farther on that head.

That in order to attain as great a Resignation as GOD required of us, *we should watch attentively over all the Motions of the Soul*, which insinuate themselves into spiritual as well as into Things of a grosser Nature; and that for this End, GOD would bestow Light upon all such

† That is, Languishings and Insensibilities in Devotion.

such as had a true Desire to be resigned to Him. That if this was my Design, I might call for him when I pleased, without any fear of being troublesome; but if otherwise, I needed not any more to visit him.



Second Conversation,

September 28th, 1666.

HE told me, That he had been always governed by the Principle of disinterested *Love*, without being anxiously concerned to know whether he should be sav'd or damn'd. But having propos'd for the End of all his Actions, to do them for the Love of GOD, he found himself perfectly easy. That he was pleas'd when he could but lift up a Straw for the Love of GOD, seeking Him only, and nothing else, no nor His Gifts.

That this Conduct of the Soul oblig'd GOD to bestow infinite Favours upon her; but that in taking the Fruits of these Favours, that's to say, the *Love* which arises from them, we should forbear to relish them in a sensible Manner; and conclude rather, that nothing of all this is GOD: And the Reason is, because we know by *Faith*, that GOD is in-

finitely greater, and quite another Thing, than what we feel. That by so doing, there happens 'twixt GOD and the Soul a wonderfull Combate; GOD giving, and the Soul denying that what she received, was *Himself*. That in this Combate, the Soul was by Faith as powerfull as GOD, since He could never bestow so much, or repeat His Graces upon her so often, but that she could still say, *It was not Himself he gave.*

That Extasy and Raptures were Signs of such Souls as were amus'd with these Gifts; whereas they should reject them, and go to GOD in a Way superior to His Gifts. That unless it were by Surprise, we should not be transported or vain of them. That GOD however hath the Disposal of us and of them.

That GOD rewards us so readily and magnificently for what we do for His Sake, that he had sometimes a Desire, if he could, to conceal from GOD what he did for His Love; that so having no Recompense for it, he might have the Satisfaction of doing something *purely* for GOD.

That he had been long troubled in Mind, believing certainly that he was damn'd: That all Mankind could not remove this Opinion, but that he had reasoned with himself in the following Manner; *I engaged in a religious Life solely for the Love of GOD; I have endeavoured to act only for Him: Whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the Love of GOD. I shall at least have this Advantage,*

vantage, that till Death I'll do what in me lies to love Him. That this Trouble had lasted with him four Years, during which Time he had suffered much.

That since that Time he neither anxiously minded Heaven or Hell. That his whole Life was nothing but a perfect Freedom and continual Rejoycing. That he set his Sins betwixt him and GOD, with a Design to tell Him, That he did not deserve His Favours; but that this did not keep GOD from pouring them out plentifully upon him. That He often (as it were) took him by the Hand, and led him before the whole heavenly Court, to let them see the poor miserable Creature in whom He delighted to display His Grace.

That *at first* we had need of a little Application to form a Habit of conversing continually with GOD, and of referring all we do to him; but that after a little Care this Way, we would find ourselves awaked and excited by His Love, without the least Trouble.

That indeed he expected after the good Days GOD had given him, to have his Turn of Suffering and Pain; but that he was not uneasy about it, knowing that being of himself unable to do any thing, GOD would not fail to give him Strength to bear them.

That when he set himself to practise any Vertue, he still addressed himself to GOD, saying, *O my GOD I cannot do this, unless Thou enablest me*: And that immediately GOD gave him Strength more than sufficient.

That

That when he had failed in any Thing, he did no more but confess it, and then said to GOD, *I shall never do otherwise, if Thou let'st me do it by myself It belongs to Thee, O my GOD, to keep me from falling, and to correct in me what's amiss* That after this he gave himself no more Uneasiness about it.

That we must act with GOD very simply, and speak frankly to Him when we ask His Assistance in what happens to us: That He won't fail to give it us, and that often times he had the Experience of it himself.

That they had lately bid him go and provide some Wine from *Burgundy*; which was a very troublesome Task to him, both because he had no manner of Address for *Business*, and had strained his Leg, and could not go about in the Boat but by rolling along the Casks: That however he had no Uneasiness about it, nor about the Purchase of the Wine; That he said to GOD, *It was His Business he was about*: upon which he found that all succeeded well. That the Year before, he had been sent into *Auvergne* on the same Account; That he could not tell how the thing was done, but that it proved very well, tho' it was not he that did it.

Just so in the Kitchen (to which he had the greatest natural Aversion) having accustomed himself to do every Thing there for the Love of GOD, *demanding on every Occasion Grace to do his Work aright*, he said, That he found a great Facility in every Thing he did during the fifteen Years he had been in that Office.

That

That he was very well pleased with the Post he was in now, but that he was going to leave that Business, since he did nothing but pleased himself in every Condition, by doing little Things for the Love of GOD.

That with him the Time of *Prayer* was not different from any other Season. That he retired indeed to Prayer when the Father Prior desired him ; but that he neither asked nor wanted to do so, because in the greatest Hurry of Business, his Soul was never turned away from GOD.

Thus knowing that he ought to love GOD in all Things, and endeavouring to acquit himself of this Duty, he said, That he had no Use for a *Director*, but wanted very much a *Confessor* to absolve him from his Sins. That he was very sensible of his Faults, but nowise discouraged by them : That he confessed them to GOD, but did not argue with Him to excuse them ; which when he had done, he resumed in Peace his ordinary Exercise of Love and Adoration.

That in his Troubles he had consulted no Body ; but knowing only by the Light of Faith that GOD was present, he contented himself, *happen what would*, to act for Him only, and to lose himself for the Love of GOD, in whom he found all his Happiness.

That † *Thoughts* spoil all : That the *Mischief* began there ; but that we must carefully

† A Multitude of useless irregular Reflections, that have no Connection with the pious State and Disposition of the Soul.

fully discard them, how soon we are sensible that they are not Things necessary to our present Business, or our Salvation ; that so we may return to our Conversation with GOD. That at the Beginning he had often passed the Time of Prayer in rejecting wandring Thoughts, and falling back into them. That he could never pray by † *Rule*, as others did : That he had however at first meditated for some time, but afterwards That went off, and that it would be impossible for him to account for it.

That he had desired to be always a *Novice*, not thinking they would receive him to *Profession*, and that he could not think his two Years were elapsed.

That he had not Courage enough to ask of GOD, to subject him to bodily Austerities ; That he did not so much as desire to do Penance, tho' he well knew he deserved it ; and that when ever GOD ordered these Things for him, He would give him Grace to perform them.

That all bodily Mortifications and other Exercises served only to our arriving to an Union with GOD by Love ; and that after he had considered this well, he found it was by much the shortest Way to go straight to GOD by a continual Exercise of Love, and doing every Thing for it's Sake.

That we ought to make a great Difference between the Acts of the Understanding and those

† A certain precise stated Method.

those of the Will : That the first were of small Importance, and all depended on the last. That the main Affair was to love and delight ourselves in GOD.

That tho' we should undergo all possible kinds of Penances, if they were separated from Love, they could not serve to do away any one Sin. That we must without Anxiety wait for the Pardon of our Sins from the Blood of *Jesus Christ*, endeavouring to love Him only with all our Heart. That GOD seem'd to choose such as were the greatest Sinners, to confer on them His greatest Favours, rather than those who continued in their Innocence, because hereby He displays more his Bounty and Goodness.

That he neither * *thought* on Death nor on his Sins, nor Heaven nor Hell ; but was carefull only to do little Things for the Love of GOD, being incapable to do great Things : That after this, there might happen to him what GOD pleased, he had no Trouble about it.

That the greatest Pains or Pleasures of this World were not to be compared with what he had experienced of both Kinds in his spiritual State : *So that he was carefull for nothing*, and feared nothing ; desiring only but one Thing of GOD, That he might not offend Him.

I

He

* We are not to imagine that this good Man did not at all entertain his Mind with these important Subjects: His Meaning then is, that he did not anxiously employ his Thoughts with what was dark and uncertain in them, but referred all to GOD.

He told me, that he had no Scruples ; for (said he) when I perceive that I have fail'd in any thing, I confels it, and say, 'Tis ordinary for me to do so ; I shall never do otherwise, if I am left to myself. If I have not come short of any Duty, I thank GOD for it, and I confels 'tis altogether owing to Him.



Third Conberlation,

November 22d, 1666.

HE told me, That *the Foundation of the spiritual Life in him*, had been a high Idea and Esteem of GOD in Faith ; which when he had once well conceived, he had no other Care at first, but to throw out of his Mind every other Thought, *that so he might do all his Actions for the Love of GOD.* That having been sometimes for a long while without thinking on GOD, he did not vex and disquiet himself, but only acknowledged his Wretchedness ; and so returned to GOD with so much the greater Confidence, by how much the more he found himself miserable by forgetting Him.

That the humble Reliance we have on GOD, honours Him much, and derives a great many Graces upon us.

That

That it was impossible, not only that GOD should deceive us, but even that He should let a Soul that was wholly resigned to Him, and resolv'd to suffer all for His Sake, suffer for any long Time.

That he was come that length, *as to have no other Thought but of GOD only*; and when he found any foreign Thoughts or Temptations stirring in his Mind, such was his Experience of GOD's ready Assistance, that sometimes he suffered them to come on; and when it was Time, he then address'd himself to GOD, and immediately they vanished.

That in the Strength of the same Experience, when he had any external Thing ado, *he never thought of it before hand*: But when it was necessarily to be done, he found in GOD as in a clear Mirrour, the proper Time of doing it.

That he had acted after this Manner for some Time past, without any anticipating Care; but that before this Experience of GOD's ready Assistance, he employ'd some Foresight.

That he had no Remembrance of what he did, and almost gave very little Attention to what he was doing. That when he rose from Table, he knew not what he had eaten, but acting in the Simplicity of his Mind, he did every thing for the Love of GOD, and thank'd Him, because He had directed his Works and an Infinity of other Acts to Him; but all this very simply, and in a Way which kept

him attach'd to the amorous Presence of GOD.

When external Business diverted him a little from thinking on GOD, there came from GOD a certain Remembrance which invested his Soul, impressing him with a *stronger Thought of Him*, and inflaming and transporting him so powerfully, that he cried out, and had some very violent Tendencies of singing and leaping like a Fool.

That he was much more united to GOD in his ordinary Employments, than when he left them off, and gave himself to Exercises of Retirement, whence he generally returned with much Aridity.

That he expected hereafter some great Pain of Body or Mind. That the worst that could happen to him, was, to lose that Sense of GOD which he had enjoyed so long: but that the Goodness of GOD assured him, He would not forsake him utterly, and that He would give him Strength to bear whatever Evil He permitted to happen to him; and therefore that he fear'd nothing, and had no Occasion to communicate his State to any Body. That when he would have done it, he had always come away more perplexed: And as he was conscious of his Readiness to die and lose himself for the Love of GOD, he had no Apprehension of Danger. That an intire Abandon to GOD was the sure Way, in which we had always Light enough for our Conduct.

That in the Beginning of the spiritual Life we ought to be faithfull in doing our Duty,
and

and denying ourselves; but after that, unspeakable Pleasures followed. That in Difficulties we needed only have Recourse to *Jesus Christ*, and beg His Grace, with which every Thing became easy.

That many People stuck at Penances and particular Exercises, and neglected the Love of GOD, which is the *End of all*. That this appeared plainly by their Works, and was the Cause why we saw so little solid Vertue in the World.

That there needed neither Art nor much Knowledge for going to GOD, but only a Heart determined to apply itself to nothing but Him, or for His Sake, and to love Him only.



Fourth Conberfation,

November 25th, 1667.

Brother Laurence spoke to me with great Fervour and Openness of Heart, of the Way and Manner of *his going to GOD*, whereof already I have given some Account.

He told me, That all consisted in our *once renouncing* heartily and throughly whatever we knew did not lead to GOD, that so we might be accustomed to a *continual Conversation* with Him without Cunning or Mystery. That we had

had nothing to do but acknowledge GOD intimately present within us, to address ourselves to Him every Moment, in order to beg His Assistance, to know His Will in all doubtfull Things, to do these Things well which we see clearly He demands of us, offering them up to Him before we do them, and thanking Him when they are over, that we have done them for His Sake.

That in this continual Conversation we are also employed in praising, adoring and loving GOD incessantly, for His infinite Goodness and Perfections.

That we ought with all Confidence and Humility to demand His Grace, upon the infinite Merits of our Lord, without being discouraged on account of our Sins. That GOD never fail'd to present us with His Grace in every Action. That he himself distinctly perceived it, and never fail'd of it, unless when he was diverted from GOD's Company, or had forgot to demand His Assistance.

That in all doubtfull Cases, GOD never failed to give us Light in them, when we had no other Design but to please Him, and act from the Principle of Love to Him.

That our *Sanctification* did not depend on changing our Works, but in doing for GOD what ordinarily we do for ourselves. That it was a Pity to see so many addicting themselves to certain Practices, which they did but very imperfectly, and that from several humane and selfish Regards, taking always the Means for the End.

That

That he found not a more excellent Method of going to GOD than by an obedient Performance of the ordinary Works that were prescribed him, purifying them as much as he could from humane Regards, and doing them from the pure Love of GOD.

That to think the Time of Prayer was different from any other Time, was greatly to deceive ourselves ; That we were as straitly bound to be united to GOD by the Action itself at the Time of our doing it, as we were by Prayer in it's Season.

That his Prayer was nothing else but a Sense of the *Presence of GOD*, being then insensible to every Thing else but Love ; but that out of these Moments he found no manner of Difference, keeping himself always near to GOD, that he might praise and bless Him with all his Strength, spending his Life in a continual Joy, hoping still however that GOD would give him somewhat to suffer, when he should grow stronger.

That we must once for all heartily confide in GOD, and resign ourselves to Him alone ; for that He would never deceive us.

That we ought never to weary in doing little Things for the Love of GOD, who regards not the Greatness of the Work, but our Love to Him in it. That we must not be surprized with the frequent Mistakes we commit in the Beginning : That at length a Habit will be form'd, which will produce it's Acts in us, without our thinking on it, and to our exceeding great Delight.

That

That in order to be wholly resigned to the Will of GOD, we needed only cultivate *Faith, Hope and Charity*: That all other Things were indifferent, and that we were to rest upon them no otherwise than we do upon a Bridge which we quickly pass along, that so we may lose ourselves in the *great End* of all Things, by a *holy Confidence and Love*.

That all Things are possible to him who *believes*, yet more to him who *hopes*: and still more to him who perseveres in the Practice of these Vertues.

That the End we should propose to ourselves is to adore GOD as perfectly as 'tis possible for us to do in this Life, and as we hope to do throughout a never ending Eternity.

That when we enter upon the spiritual Life, we ought to examine to the bottom what we are; and then we should find ourselves worthy of all Contempt, unworthy of the Christian Name, subject to all kinds of Misery, to an Infinity of Accidents that trouble us, which render us unequal in our Health, in our Humors, and in our external and internal Dispositions. In fine, Persons whom GOD desires to humble, by numberless Pains and Labours, as well without as within. After this, are we to wonder if there should happen to us from our Neighbour, Troubles, Temptations, Oppositions and Contradictions? Should we not, on the contrary, submit to all these Things, and bear them as long as GOD pleases, because they are for our Good and Advantage?

That the greater Perfection a Soul aspires after, the more she depends on divine Grace.

Spiritual



Spiritual Maxims,

And the Practice of the

Presence of G O D.

ALL Things are possible to him who *believes*, more so to him who *hopes*, yet more to him who *loves*, and still more to him who *practises* and *perseveres* in these three Vertues.

All those who are baptized, believing as they ought to do, have made the first Step in the Way of Perfection, and will be perfect as long as they shall persevere in the Practice of the following *Maxims*.

1. To regard always GOD and His Glory, in every Thing we do, say or undertake. That the End we propose be, to adore GOD as perfectly in this Life as we hope to do throughout all Eternity ; and to resolve
K firmly

firmly to surmount, by the Grace of GOD, all the Difficulties we shall meet with in the spiritual Life.

2. When we enter upon the spiritual Life, we ought thoroughly to consider what we are, and we shall find ourselves worthy of all Contempt, unworthy of the Christian Name, subject to all kinds of Miseries, to numberless Accidents which trouble us, and render us unequal in our Health, in our Humours, and in our external and internal Disposition. In fine, Persons whom GOD desires to humble, by an Infinity of Pains and Labours both without and within.

3. We ought undoubtedly to believe 'tis for our Advantage, and that it is agreeable to GOD to make a Sacrifice of us to Himself. That it is common to His divine Providence to abandon us to all kinds of States, to suffer all kinds of Troubles, Miseries and Temptations for the Love of GOD, as long as He pleases; since without this Submission of Heart and Spirit to the Will of GOD, Devotion and Perfection cannot subsist.

4. A Soul studies so much the greater Dependence on divine Grace, as she aspires after a higher Perfection; and the divine Aid is so much the more necessary to her every Moment, that without it she can do nothing: The World, Nature and the Devil conspire in such a strong and continual War against her, that without this actual Assistance, and this humble and necessary *Dependence*, they would carry her off, maugre all her own Efforts.

forts. This seems hard to Nature, but Grace is pleased with it, and rests satisfied.

Practices necessary to acquire the spiritual Life.

1. **T**He most holy, the most common, and the most necessary Practice in the spiritual Life, is, the *Presence of GOD*: 'Tis to accustom ourselves to, and delight in His holy Company, speaking humbly, and entertaining ourselves affectionately with Him at all Times, every Moment, without any Rule or stated Method, especially in Times of Temptations, Troubles, Aridities, Wearinesses, and even of Infidelities and Sins.

2. We should make it our chief Study, that indifferently all our Actions be in a certain manner, *little Conversations with GOD*, nevertheless without Study, but as if they proceeded from the Purity and Simplicity of our Hearts.

3. We must do all our Actions with Weight and Measure, without Precipitancy or Impetuosity, which speak out a Mind that's dissipated. We must go about our ordinary Labour gently, calmly and affectionately with GOD, intreating Him to prosper it: And by the Means of this continual Attention on GOD, we shall bruise the Serpent's Head, and quickly disarm him.

4. We ought during our daily Labour and other Actions, our Reading, tho' it were the

Scriptures ; I go further, even during our external Devotions and our vocal Prayers, we ought (*says he*) to stop for a Moment as often as we can, and adore GOD in the *Fond* of our Heart, and tho' transiently, taste and feel His Love and Goodness. For, since you cannot but know that GOD is present with you in the Time of your Occupation and Labour ; That He is in the *Fond* and *Center* of your Soul : Why should you not then from one Time to another, cease from your external Labours, and even your vocal Prayers, that you may internally adore Him, praise Him, offer Him your Heart, and return Him Thanks for all His Mercies ? What can be more agreeable to GOD, than thus a thousand and a thousand Times a Day to quit and renounce all the Creatures, that we may retire within ourselves, and adore GOD in our *Interior*. Besides, this is to destroy Self-love, which cannot subsist but among the Creatures, and from which those interior Returns to GOD disengage us insensibly.

In fine, we can give no greater Testimony of our *Fidelity* to GOD, than by renouncing and despising the Creature a thousand and a thousand Times, that we may enjoy one single Moment with the Creator

I do not pretend by this to oblige you always to leave the *Exterior*; for that cannot be done ; but *Prudence*, which is the Mother of all Vertues, must serve here as your Rule. I say however that 'tis a very common Mistake among Spiritual Persons, not to quit from
Time

Time to Time the *Exterior*. that they may adore GOD within themselves, and peaceably enjoy some few Moments of His divine Presence. The Digression has been long. but I thought the Subj-^t required all this Explanation. Let us now return to our *Practices*.

5. All these *Adorations* must be made by *Faith*, believing that GOD is truly in our Hearts; That we must adore, love and serve Him in Spirit and in Truth; That He sees every Thing that passeth, and shall be transfused in us and in all the Creatures; That He is *Independent* of all, and He on whom all Creatures depend; infinite in all kinds of Perfection, who by His infinite Excellency and sovereign Power merits all that we are, and every Thing that's in Heaven and Earth, which he can dispose of at his good Pleasure in Time and throughout Eternity. We owe Him in Justice all our Thoughts, Words and Actions. Let us see then if we do so.

6. We must carefully examine what those Vertues are which are most necessary for us, and such as are most difficultly acquired; the Sins whereinto generally we fall and the more frequent and inevitable Occasions of our Ruin. We ought during our Conflict to have Recourse to GOD with an intire Confidence, continue firm and steady in the Presence of His divine Majesty, adore Him humbly, represent to Him our Miseries and Weaknesses, demand affectionately of Him the Aids of His Grace; and by so doing, we shall find in Him all Vertues, tho' we have none ourselves.

How

*How we must adore GOD in Spirit
and in Truth.*

THERE are three Things in this Question, which must be answered.

1. I say, That to adore GOD in *Spirit and in Truth*, is to adore Him as we ought. GOD is a Spirit, and we must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth; that's to say, by a true and humble Adoration of Spirit, in the Ground and Center of our Souls. There's none but GOD alone who can see this Adoration; which we can repeat so very often, that at length it shall become a thing natural to us, and as if GOD was one with our Soul, and the Soul one with GOD. Practice will make this evident.

2. To adore GOD in Truth, is to acknowledge Him to be what He is, and ourselves to be really what we are. To worship GOD in Truth, is to acknowledge truly, actually and in Spirit that GOD is what He is; that is, infinitely perfect, infinitely adorable, infinitely removed from Evil, and so of all the divine Attributes. And what Man is there of however so little Reason, who would not employ all his Powers in paying all these Respects and Adorations to this great GOD.

3. To worship GOD in Truth, is furthermore to acknowledge that we are intirely opposite to Him, and that (if we will) He desires to make us like Him. Who then would be so imprudent as to withdraw for one Moment

ment from the Love, the Service, and the continual Adorations that we owe Him ?

Of the Union of the Soul with GOD.

There are three kinds of Union ; the *first* is habitual, the *second* virtual, and the *third* is actual.

1. *Habitual Union*, is, when we are united to GOD by Peace.

2. *Virtual Union*, is, when beginning any Action by which we are united to GOD, we continue united to Him by that Action all the Time it lasts.

3. *Actual Union* is the most perfect ; and tho' 'tis spiritual, it's Motion is nevertheless felt, because the Soul is not insensible as in other Unions, but is powerfully excited ; and it's Operation is more lively than that of Fire, and more luminous than the Sun when he is not clouded. We may however be in a Mistake as to this : for it is not a simple Expression of the Heart, as when we say, *O my GOD, I love Thee with all my Soul*, or such other Words ; but it is I know not what, sweet, peacefull, spiritual, humble, affectionate and most simple Motion, which inclines and constrains the Soul to love GOD, to adore Him, and even to embrace Him with inexpressible Tendernefs and Affection, and which a happy Experience only can teach us.

4. All those who pretend to the divine Union should know, that what can rejoyce the
the

the Will is really delightfull and agreeable to it; or at least, that the Will reckons it is so.

All the World again must acknowledge, that GOD is incomprehensible; and that in Order to be united to Him, we must deprive the Will of all kinds of *sensible Relishes*, and spiritual and corporal Pleasures; that being thus disengaged, she may love GOD above all Things: For if the Will could in any measure comprehend GOD, it could only be by Love. There's a great deal of Difference between the Relishes and Sentiments of the Will, and the Operations of the same Will: For the sensible Relishes and Sentiments of the Will are in the Soul, as in their proper Boundary; but it's Operation, which is properly Love, terminates in GOD as it's End.

Of the Presence of GOD.

1. **T**HE Presence of GOD is an Application of our Spirit to GOD, or a Remembrance of GOD present within us; which may be done either by the Imagination or the Understanding.

2. I know a Person who these forty Years has practised the intellectual Presence of GOD, to which he gives many other Names: Sometimes he calls it a *simple Act*, or the *clear and distinct Knowledge of GOD*; sometimes an *indistinct View*, or a *general and affectionate Regard of GOD*, and a *Remembrance of GOD*. At other Times he calls it an *Attention to GOD*. a
silent

silent Conversation with Him, a Repose in Him, the Life and Peace of the Soul. In fine. this Person told me, That all these Ways in which he has expressed the Presence of GOD, come to the same Thing. and that 'tis at present as it were natural to him. And here's now the Way it is so.

3. He says, That by the Strength of Acts, and by a frequent Recollection of his Spirit in the divine Presence, a Habit of this is formed in such a Way, that as soon as he is disengaged of external Occupations, and very often when he is most employed in them, the superior Part of his Soul is raised without his Study, and remains as it were suspended and fixedly staid in GOD above all Things, as in it's Center and Resting place; he feeling almost always his Spirit in this Suspension accompanied with Faith. This satisfies him, and 'tis what he calls *the actual Presence of GOD*, which comprehends all other kinds, and much more: So that he now lives, as if there was no other but GOD and he in the World. He converses every where with GOD; he demands of Him what he wants, and rejoices incessantly a thousand and a thousand Ways with Him.

4. 'Tis fit however to know, that this Conversation with GOD is managed in the Ground and Center of the Soul, where the Soul speaks to GOD Heart to Heart, and always in a great and profound Peace which she possesseth in GOD. What passeth externally is to the Soul like a Fire of Chaff, which is extin-

L

guished

guished in proportion as it's blown up, and happens seldom or never to disturb it's inward Peace.

5. But to return to our Exercise of the *Presence of GOD*; I say, that this sweet and affectionate Regard to *GOD*, kindles insensibly a divine Fire in the Soul, which consumes it so ardently with the Love of *GOD*, that one is obliged to do many external Things to moderate it.

6 We would be surprized to know what the Soul says sometimes to *GOD*, who seems to take so very much Pleasure in these Conversations, that he allows her every Thing, provided she will but remain always with Him. as in her true Center: And as if He dreaded her returning to the Creatures, He is carefull to provide her in what she can desire, in so much that she often times finds within herself a Savoury Food, very delicious to her Taste; tho' in the mean Time she never desir'd nor procur'd it, nor for her Share contributed any thing to it, but her simple Consent only.

7 The *Presence of GOD* then is the Life and Nourishment of the Soul, which may be acquired by the Grace of our Lord. And now follow the Means of attaining this Exercise.

Means to be used for acquiring the Exercise of the Presence of GOD.

1. **T**HE *First* Mean is a great Purity of Life, in watching attentively to do, say and think

think on nothing which may be displeasing to GOD ; and when any such Thing happens, humbly to beg His Forgiveness, and to repent for it.

2. The *Second* is a great *Fidelity* in the Practice of this Presence, and to the interior Regard of GOD in Faith ; which must always be done meekly, humbly and affectionately, without being in any Trouble or Disquiet

3. We must take particular Care, that this inward Regard, tho' it should last but for a Moment, precede our external Actions, that from Time to Time it accompany them, and that in like manner we finish them. As it must needs take Time, and a good deal of Pains to acquire this Practice; so neither must we be discouraged, tho' we fail in it: For Habit requires some Labour ; but when once it's form'd, all goes on pleasantly.

Is it not reasonable, that the Heart, which is the first Thing in us that has Life, and governs all the other Members of the Body, be both the first and the last in loving and adoring GOD, whether we begin or end our bodily or spiritual Labours, and generally in all the other Exercises of Life? And 'tis here, namely in the *Heart*, that we must be carefull to form and produce this little interior Regard, which (as I have already said) must be done without any Trouble or Study, to make it the more easy to us

4. It will not be amiss for such as begin this Practice, to form inwardly some few Words, such as, *O my GOD, I am all Thine.*

O GOD of Love, I love Thee with all my Heart.
O LORD make me such as Thou wouldst have me to be: or such like Words as Love produceth off hand But they must take Care that their Mind do not wander, nor return to the Creature, but that they keep it attach'd solely to GOD; that seeing themselves thus press'd and constrain'd by the Will, the Soul may at length be obliged to abide with GOD.

5 This Presence of GOD, tho' somewhat painfull and uneasy in the Beginning, yet, if practis'd with Fidelity, works secretly in the Soul wonderfull Effects, attracts the Graces of GOD in a plentiful Manner, and leads it insensibly to this simple Regard, to this affectionate View of GOD as every where present; which is the most holy, the most solid, the most easy, and most effectual Method of Prayer.

6. Observe, if you please, that in order to attain to this State, we suppose the Mortification of the Senses, it being impossible that a Soul which hath yet any Complacency in the Creature, can intirely enjoy this divine Presence; *for to be with GOD, we must absolutely quit the Creature*

GOD desires to possess our Souls all alone. If we do not empty them of every thing that's not Himself. He cannot act and do what He pleaseth. He complains often times of our Blindness. He cries out incessantly, that we are to be pitied for being pleased with so little. *I have says he infinite Treasures to give you, and yet a little sensible Devotion, which passeth away*

in a Moment, satisfies you. By so doing, we bind up GOD's Hands, and we stop Him from pouring forth His Grace plentifully upon us.

7. It would be of Use towards our advancing in the *Practice of the Presence of GOD*, to disengage ourselves of all Cares. nay, and of a number of particular Pieces of Devotion, tho' tolerably good, wherewith we load ourselves indiscreetly; for these Things are only Means for arriving to the End. If then by this Exercise of the Presence of GOD, we find ourselves with Him who is our *End*, 'tis nowise profitable to return to the Means, but we may carry on an Intercourse of Love with Him, abiding in His sacred Presence, sometimes by an Act of Adoration, at other times by an Act of Sacrifice, Resignation or Thanksgiving; and by all the other Ways that our Mind can invent.

8. It is not always necessary to be at Church, in order to converse with GOD: We may make an *Oratory of our Hearts*, into which we may often times retire, and there converse with Him. Every Body is capable of these familiar Conversations with GOD. A little Elevation of the Heart is sufficient, (as *Brother Laurence* said, when he recommended this Exercise to a Gentleman) a little Remembrance of GOD, an interior Adoration, tho' one was marching with Sword in Hand. These Prayers, tho' short, are nevertheless most agreeable to GOD, and are so far from making a Man lose his Courage in the most dan-

dangerous Exploits, that they rather strengthen it. Let him then mind them as much as he can. This Method of praying is very proper and necessary for a Soldier, who is daily exposed to the Danger of his Life, and very often of his Salvation.

9. *This Exercise of the Presence of GOD* contributes much to our praying aright; for by keeping the Mind throughout the Day from roving, and closely united to GOD, it makes it the more easy for us to be serene and tranquil in our Devotion. Our whole Life being full of Rocks and Dangers, 'tis impossible to guard against them without the continual Assistance of GOD. Now, how can we ask His Assistance, without being often with Him? And how can we be with Him, without often thinking on Him? And how can we think often on Him, but by a pious Habit of keeping ourselves in His Presence, that we may demand from Him all these Graces which every Moment we stand in Need of?

10. Nothing can relieve us so much amidst the Sorrows and Miseries of Life, as this familiar Conversation with GOD. If it's faithfully practised, our very bodily Maladies will sit light upon us. Very often GOD permits us to suffer, for purifying our Souls and obliging us to remain constantly with Him. How then can the Man that's always with GOD, and desires nothing but Him, be capable of Misery and Pain? We ought then to adore Him in our Infirmities, offer Him from Time to Time our Sorrows, demand lovingly of

of Him, as a Child does of his Father, & Conformity to His holy Will, and the Aids of His Grace. These *short Prayers* are very proper for sick Persons, and are excellent Charms against Melancholly and Grief.

11. 'Tis a *Paradise to suffer and to be with GOD*; for this End we must habituate ourselves in all our Tribulations to a familiar Conversation with Him, keeping our Minds from wandring from Him. We must unweariedly watch over ourselves, that we may do, say or think on nothing in Sicknefs, under the Pretence of Ease, that may displease Him. When thus our Minds are employed with GOD, our Sufferings will be attended with Sweetnesses, Unctions and Consolations.

12. Men do not comprehend these Truths; nor do I wonder at it, because they look upon Maladies as the Pains and Evils of Nature, and not as the Favours of GOD. They who consider them as coming from the Hand of GOD, as the Effects of His Mercy, and as the Means He useth for the Salvation of these on whom He sends them, generally feel in them great Consolations.

The Advantages that arise from the Exercise of the Presence of GOD.

1. **T**HE First Advantage that the Soul receives from the *Presence of GOD*, is, That it's Faith is rendered so much the more active and vigorous in all the Occurrences of Life,

Life, especially in Necessities; because this easily procures to us the Grace of GOD in our Temptations, and in that unavoidable Commerce and Fellowship we have with the Creatures. For the Soul being accustomed by this Exercise to the Practice of *Faith*, by a simple Remembrance or Thought, sees and feels GOD present, and so calls upon Him easily and effectually, and obtains what she wanted. One may say, That there's something here in the Soul that comes near the State of the Blessed: The more she advanceth, the more her Faith becomes vigorous; and at length it turns so penetrating and distinct, that one may as it were say, I no more *believe*, but I *see* and have the *Experience of divine Things*.

2 The Exercise of the *Presence of GOD* fortifies us in *Hope*. Our Hope increaseth in proportion to our Experience: And as our Faith penetrates by this holy Practice into the Secrets of the Divinity, and discovers in GOD a Beauty infinitely surpassing not only that of these Bodies which we see here on Earth, but even that of the most perfect Souls and Angels; so our Hope is strengthened and increased: And the *Greatness* of this Good it pretends to enjoy, and which in a certain manner it tastes of, encourageth and supporteth it.

3 It inspires the *Will* with a Contempt of the Creatures, and melts it in the Fire of *sacred Love*; because being always with GOD, who is a consuming Fire, He reduceth to Ashes whatever can oppose Him: And this Soul thus consumed can no longer live but in
the

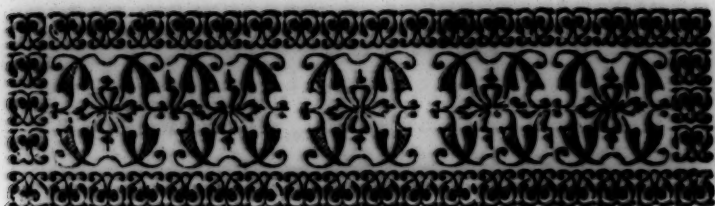
the divine Presence ; a Presence which produceth in the Heart a holy Ardour, a sacred Keeness, and a violent Desire to see this GOD beloved, acknowledged, served and adored by all the Creatures

4. By the *Presence of GOD*, and this interior Regard, the Soul becomes so familiarly acquainted with GOD, that she passes the most part of her Life in continual Acts of Love, Adoration, Contrition, Oblation, Confidence, Thanksgiving, Prayer, and all the other excellent Vertues ; and sometimes it becomes one permanent and abiding Act, for this Reason, that the Soul is always in the continual Exercise of this divine Presence.

I know we will find but very few who have come this length. 'Tis a Grace which GOD only vouchsafes some chosen Souls ; this simple Regard and Intuition of GOD being a Gift that comes from His bountifull Hand. But I will say, for the Comfort of all these that will embrace this holy Exercise, that GOD commonly vouchsafes *This* to all such as are disposed for it ; and if He does not give it, they may at least, by the Assistance of His ordinary Grace, acquire (by the Exercise of the divine Presence) a Method and Degree of Prayer which comes very near it.

M

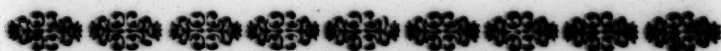
L E T



LETTERS

O F

Nicolas Herman,
On the Presence of GOD.



The first Letter,

To the Reverend Mother N.

My Reverend Mother,

I Have taken this Occasion by N. to communicate to you the Sentiments of one of our Society, concerning the wonderful Effects and the continual Assistance which he receives from the Exercise of the Presence of GOD. Let us both endeavour to profit by them.

You

You must know, that his principal Study for forty Years, since he first commenced *Religious*, hath been *to be always with GOD*, and to do, say and think on nothing which may displease Him, without any other View than that of a pure Love to Him, and because He merits infinitely more. He is at present so habituated to this divine Presence, that he receives from it continual Succours upon all Occasions. For about thirty Years his Soul has been possessed of such continual internal Joys, and these sometimes so great, that to moderate them, and keep them from appearing outwardly, he has been obliged to do some little innocent Things externally, which savour'd more of Folly than Devotion.

If at any Time he happens to be too much absent from *this divine Presence*, GOD instantly makes Himself be felt in his Soul, in order to recall him; which falls out often, when he is much engaged in external Occupations: He answers with exact Fidelity these interior Attractions, either by an Elevation of his Soul to GOD, or by a sweet and affectionate Regard, or by such Words as Love contrives on these Occasions; such as, *My GOD, here I am altogether Thine. O LORD make me such as Thou desirest I should be.* And then it seems (as in effect he feels it) that this GOD of Love is pleased with these few Words, and reposes himself again in the Fond and Center of his Soul. The Experience he has of these Things gives him such Assurance, that GOD is always in the Fond of the Soul, that now by what-

ever he does, or happens to him, he can no more doubt of it

Judge now by this, *my Reverend Mother*, what Content and Satisfaction he enjoys, finding continually in himself so great a Treasure. He is no longer in any anxious Search after it, but has it open before him, and may take of it what he pleases.

He oftentimes complains of our Blindness, and he cries out incessantly, that we are to be pitied for contenting ourselves with so little. GOD (saith he) *has infinite Treasures to give us, and yet a little sensible Devotion, which wears off in a Moment, satisfieth us* How blind are we, since by so doing we bind up GOD's Hands, and put a Stop to the plentiful Effusion of His Graces But when He finds a Soul penetrated with a lively Faith He bestows His Graces abundantly upon her. There they flow like a Torrent that's kept by Force against it's ordinary Course; which when it has found a Passage, spreads itself with Impetuosity and Abundance

Yes indeed, we often stop this Torrent by the little Regard we have for it Let us do so no more, *my dear Mother* Let us enter into ourselves, and throw down the Bank that hinders it Let us make way for Grace, and redeem our lost Time We have it may be but a short while to live; Death is close upon us Let us be on our Guard We die but once Again, I say, let us enter into ourselves Time pushes on. There is no Room for Delay Every one is for himself. I believe you have taken your Measures so right,
that

that you will not be surpris'd. I commend you for it, it is *the one Thing needfull*. We must however be always at work, because not to advance in the spiritual Life, is to go back; but those who have the Gale of the holy Spirit, row on even in their Sleep. If the Vessel of our Soul is still tofs'd by Winds and Storms, let us awake our Lord who reposes in it, and he will instantly calm the Sea.

I have taken the Liberty to impart to you these good Sentiments, that you may compare them with your own. They will serve to kindle and stir them up, if unhappily (which I pray GOD prevent, for it would be a great Misfortune) they be in the least cooled. Let both you and I recall our first Fervours. Let us profit by the Example and Sentiments of this good Brother, so little known of the World, but known of GOD, and much caressed by Him. I shall pray for you; and I earnestly desire you will do the same for me, who am in our Lord,

My Reverend Mother,

Your's, &c.

Paris, June 1.
1682.

Second

Second Letter,

To the Reverend Mother N.

My Reverend and much Honoured Mother,

I Received this Day two Books and a Letter from Sister N. who is disposing herself for Profession ; and for this begs the Prayers of your good Society, and your own in particular. In it she takes Notice to me of the singular and great Confidence she has in you. Do not disappoint her. Beg of GOD, that she make her Sacrifice from the sole View of loving Him, and with a firm Resolution to be altogether His. I shall send you one of those Books which treat of the *Presence of GOD* : 'Tis that, in my Opinion, wherein all the spiritual Life consists ; and in practising whereof, we will soon become holy.

I know, that in Order to this, the Heart must be emptied of all other Things ; for GOD desires to possess it alone : And as He cannot do this without emptying it of every Thing which is not Himself, so neither can He act in it, nor do in it what He pleases.

There is no kind of Life in the World sweeter or more delicious, than that of a continual Conversation with GOD. They only know this who practise and experience it. I counsel you however not to do it from this Motive : 'Tis not Pleasure or Consolation we
are

are to seek after in this Exercise ; but let us do it from a Principle of Love, and because GOD desires it.

Were I a Preacher, I would preach nothing else but the Practice of the *Presence of GOD* ; and were I a Director, I would advise all the World to it. So necessary and so easy to do I think it.

Ah ! did we but know the Need we have of the Graces and Assistances of GOD, we should never lose Sight of Him, no not for a Moment. Believe me in this ; and immediately make a firm and pious Resolution never voluntarily to depart from Him, and to live the rest of your Days depriv'd, for the Love of Him (if GOD thinks fit) of all the Consolations of Heaven and Earth. Put your Hand to the Work : If you do it as you ought, assure your self you'll very soon find the Effects of it. I shall assist you with my poor Prayers. I commend my self earnestly to your's and these of your holy Society, being their's, and in particular

Your's, &c;c

Chica

Third Letter,

To the same Person.

My Reverend and much Honoured Mother,

I Received from Mrs. N. the Parcel which you gave her for me. I am surprized you have not given me your Opinion of the Book I sent you, and which you must have received. Practise it much in your old Age : 'Tis better late than never.

I cannot imagine how religious People can live satisfied without the Practice of the *Presence of GOD*. For my own part, I keep myself retired with Him in the Fond and Center of my Soul as much as I can ; and when I am in this manner with Him, I fear nothing : But the least turning away from Him is a Hell to me

This Exercise does not much demolish the Body : It is proper however to mortifie it sometimes, nay, and often to deprive it of many little, innocent and lawfull Pleasures : For GOD will not suffer a Soul which desires to be altogether resigned to Him, to take any Consolation but in Him only. This is more than reasonable

I do not say however, that on this Account we are to put any violent Constraint on ourselves : No ; we must serve GOD with a holy Liberty ; we must do our Work faithfully,
with-

without any Trouble or Disquiet, recollecting our Mind in GOD meekly and peaceably, as often as we find it distracted and turned away from Him.

'Tis nevertheless necessary to place all our Confidence in GOD, and to lay aside all other Cares, even some particular Pieces of Devotion, which tho' good in themselves, yet are such as we burden ourselves with indifferently, and because after all, those Devotions are Means only by which we arrive at the End. Thus, when by this Exercise of the *Presence of GOD*, we are with Him who is our End, 'tis unprofitable for us to return to the Means; but we may continue with Him our Commerce of Love, abiding in his holy Presence one while by an Act of Adoration, Praise or Desire; another while by an Act of Oblation or Thanksgiving, and by all the other Ways that our Minds can invent.

Be not at all discouraged on account of the Reluctancy you may find to this from Nature. You must do Violence to your self. Very often in the Beginning, People imagine their Time is lost; but we must go forward, and resolve to persevere in it to Death, in Spite of all Difficulties. I recommend myself to the Prayers of your whole Society, to your's in particular: And I am in our Lord,

Your's, &c.

*Paris, Nov. 3.
1685.*

N

fourth

Fourth Letter,**To Madam N.***Madam,*

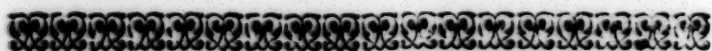
I Pity you much. If you could commit the Care of your Affairs to Mr. N. and employ yourself solely in Devotion to GOD, you would much promote your spiritual State. GOD requires no great Things of us. A little Remembrance of Him from Time to Time, a little Adoration of Him is sufficient. You ought sometimes to demand His Grace, sometimes to offer Him your Sufferings, at other times to thank Him for the Favours He has done you, and still vouchsafes you in the midst of your Troubles, and to comfort yourself with Him as often as you can. Lift up your Heart to Him even at your Meals, and amidst the Hurry of Company. The least little Remembrance will be agreeable to Him: And this you will do to very good purpose, tho' you cry not very loud; for GOD is nearer to us than we imagine.

We need not be always at Church in order to converse with GOD. No. We may make our Heart an Oratory, where we may retire from Time to Time, and converse with Him there meekly, humbly and lovingly. Every Body is capable of such familiar Conversations with GOD, more or less. He knows what

what we can do. Let us begin then ; perhaps He expects no more from us but a generous Resolution. Take Courage. We have but a short Time to live. You are almost Sixty four, and I am very near Eighty Years old. Let us live and die with GOD. Afflictions will be always sweet and pleasant to us, while we are in His Company ; but without Him the greatest Pleasures will soon turn to an eternal Punishment to us. Blessed be He for all.
Amen.

Use yourself then by Degrees to adore Him in this manner, to offer Him from Time to Time your Heart, during the Course of your daily Labour, yea, and if you can, every Moment. Do not confine and hamper yourself by Rules or particular Devotions, but do it in *Faith*, in the Spirit of Humility and Love. You may assure Mr. and Mrs. N. of my poor Prayers, and that I am their Servant, and particularly

Your's in our Lord.



Fifth Letter,

To the Reverend Father N.

My Reverend Father,

Since I do not find my manner of Life in Books, which however gives me no kind of Uneasiness ; yet for the greater Security, I

would very gladly know Your Sentiments as to my present State.

Some Days ago, in a particular Conversation with a Person of Piety, he told me, *That the spiritual Life was a Life of Grace, which begins with a servile Fear, increaseth by the Hope of eternal Life, and is finished and accomplished by pure Love. That every one of these States had it's different Degrees, by which we finally arrived to this blessed Consummation.*

I have not followed all these Methods. On the contrary, I know not by what Attraction they quite frightened me, which was the Reason that at my first entring into Religion, I resolved to abandon myself wholly to GOD, in satisfaction of my Sins, and to renounce for His Love every Thing that was not Himself.

For the first Years, I generally employed myself in my Devotions, with the Thoughts of Death, of Judgment, Hell, Heaven, and my Sins. I continued this Way for some Years, applying myself carefully throughout the rest of the Day, and even during my Business and Labour, to the *Presence of GOD*, whom I considered as always about me, and often in the Ground of my Heart. This impressed me with such a high Esteem and Love for GOD, that † *Faith* only was capable of satisfying me in this Point.

I

† I suppose he means that all distinct Notions he could form of GOD were unsatisfactory, because he perceived them to be most unworthy of GOD; and therefore his Mind was not to be satisfied but by the Views of Faith, which apprehends GOD as infinite and incomprehensible as He is in Himself, and not as He can be conceived by humane Ideas.

I came insensibly to do the same Thing during my set Times of Prayer, which caused in me great Sweetnesses and Consolations. This then was the Method I observed at first; and yet I can tell You, that during the first ten Years I suffered much on account of the Apprehension I had, that I was not as wholly resigned to GOD as I could have wished. My past Sins that were always before me, and the many and great Favours which GOD vouchsafed me, were the Matter and Source of all my Miseries. Throughout this Period of my State, I often fell, and quickly rose again. It seemed to me, that the Creatures, Reason, and GOD Himself, were against me, and *Faith* only with me. I was sometimes troubled, thinking it was an Effect of my Presumption, that I should all at once be in a State which others attain with great Pains and Labour; at other times, that this was a willfull Delusion, and that there was no Salvation for me.

When after all, I thought on nothing, but to end my Days in these Troubles and anxious Reflections, (which by the by did not lessen the Confidence I had in GOD, but on the contrary served only to increase my Faith) I found myself changed of a sudden, and my Soul, which was hitherto continually disquieted, felt a profound internal Peace, as if she had been in her Center and Place of Rest.

From that Time forth, I act and labour before GOD simply in Faith, with Humility and Love; and I carefully apply myself to
do,

do, say or think on nothing which may displease Him.

As for what passes within me at present, I cannot express it. I have no Trouble or Doubt about my State, because I have no other Will but that of GOD; which I endeavour to accomplish in all Things, and to which I am so resigned, that I would not lift up a Straw from the Ground against His Order, nor from any other Motive but that of pure Love to Him.

I have quitted all Devotional Exercises and Prayers, but such only as I am tied to perform by my State and Office; and I am now employed in keeping myself always in the *Divine Presence*, which I do by a simple Attention, and by a general affectionate Regard of GOD, which I may call the *actual Presence of GOD*, or to speak better, a silent and secret Conversation of the Soul with GOD; which is no more transient but habitual, and which causes in me sometimes such inward Joys and Satisfactions, and even such great Content externally, that I am forced to moderate them, and keep them from appearing to others, nay, and to do some little trifling Things to outward Appearance which savour more of Folly than Devotion.

In fine, *my Reverend Father*, I cannot now any longer doubt, but that my Soul has been with GOD upwards of these thirty Years. I forbear telling You a great many Things, that I may not be tedious; yet I think it proper to inform You after what manner I consider

consider myself in the Presence of GOD, whom I look upon as my *King*.

I consider myself then as the most miserable of all Mankind, full of Corruption and Wounds, and as one who has committed all kinds of Crimes against his King. Touched with a sensible Regret, I confess to Him all my Wickedness; I beg His Forgiveness, and I abandon myself into His Hands, that He may do with me what He pleases. This King full of Goodness and Mercy, is so very far from chastising me, that He embraces me with Love, makes me eat at His Table, serves me with His own Hands, gives me the Keys of His Treasures, and treats me in all Respects as His Favourite. He converses and delights Himself with me a thousand and a thousand Ways, without ever speaking of my Pardon, or removing my first Habits. And tho' I beg of Him to make me according to His own Heart, yet I see myself always the more weak and miserable, tho' much caressed by GOD. Thus it is I consider myself from Time to Time in His holy Presence.

My ordinary Way is this simple Attention, and this general and affectionate Regard to GOD, to which I find myself often attach'd with greater Sweetness and Satisfaction than that of a Child on it's Nurse's Breasts; and if I durst use the Expression, I should choose to call this State the *Breasts of GOD*, on account of the inexpressible Sweetness which there I taste and experience.

If at any Time, through Necessity or Infir-
mity, I wander from it, I am immediately
recalled by interior Motions, so charming and
delicious, that I am ashamed to speak of them.
I beg of You, *my Reverend Father*, to reflect
rather upon my great Wretchedness, which
You very well know, than upon the signal
Graces which GOD vouchsafes me, how un-
worthy and unthankfull soever I am for them.

As for my stated Hours of Prayer, they are
nothing but a Continuation of the same Exer-
cise. Sometimes I consider myself as a Stone
before the Carver, when he is to make a Sta-
tue of it: And presenting myself thus before
GOD, I beg of Him to form His perfect Image
in my Soul, and to make me altogether like
Himself.

At other times, as soon as I apply myself to
Prayer, I feel all my Spirit and Soul elevated
without any Care or Effort of mine; and it
continues as it were suspended, and firmly fix-
ed in GOD as in it's Center and Place of Rest.

I know that some People brand this State
with Inactivity, Delusion and Self-love. I
own indeed, that it is a holy Inactivity and a
happy Self-love, was the Soul in this State ca-
pable of it; because in Effect when she is in
this Repose, she cannot be troubled with such
Acts as she was formerly accustomed to, and
which were *then* her Support; but which *now*
would rather hinder than assist her.

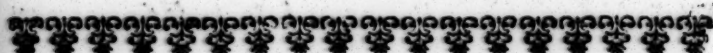
I cannot bear however they should call this
a Delusion, because the Soul which enjoys
GOD in this manner desires nothing but Him-
self:

self : And if this be a Delusion in me, it belongs to GOD to remedy it. Let Him do with me what He pleases. I desire nothing but Himself, and to be wholly resigned to Him.

You'll oblige me however in sending me Your Opinion of these Matters. I shall always pay a great Deference to Your Sentiments. I have a particular Esteem for Your Reverence ; and I am in our Lord,

My Reverend Father,

Yours, &c.



Sixth Letter,

To the Reverend Mother N.

My Reverend Mother,

MY Prayers, however little valuable, shall not be wanting in Your Behalf. I promised You them, and I will keep my Word. How happy should we be, if we could but find the Treasure which the Gospel speaks of ; all the rest would appear nothing to us. As it is infinite, the more one searches for it, he finds the greater Riches. Let us incessantly labour for it, and not weary till we have found it.

O

[*Then*]

[Then he speaks of some private Affairs, and a little below he adds,] In fine, my Reverend Mother, I know not what I shall turn to ; it seems that a certain Peaceableness of Soul and Repose of Mind come upon me while I'm asleep: If I was capable of Pain, it would be because I have none ; and was it lawfull, I would gladly solace myself, because there is a middle State where I think to suffer for the Satisfaction of my Sins. I know not however what it is that GOD reserves for me. I am in so great Tranquillity, that I fear nothing : And what can I be afraid of when I am with Him ? I keep myself as much resigned to Him as possible. Blessed be He for all. *Amen.* I am,

Your's, &c.



Seventh Letter,

To Madam N.

Madam,

WE have an infinitely good GOD, who knows what we want : I always thought that He would reduce You to Extremity. He will come in His own Time, and when You are least thinking on it. Hope in Him more than ever. Thank Him, together with me,
for

for the Favours He does You, especially for the Strength and Patience he affords You in Your Afflictions. This is an evident Sign of the Care He takes of You. Comfort Yourself then with Him, and thank Him for every Thing.

I likewise admire the Fortitude and Bravery of Mr. ——— GOD has given him a good Disposition and a good Will, but he has still a little of the World in him, and a great deal of Youth. I hope however the Affliction which GOD has sent upon him, will prove a wholesome Medicine to him, and will make him enter into himself. 'Tis an Occurrence very proper to engage him to put all his Trust in Him, who accompanies him every where. Let him think on Him the oftner, especially in the greatest Dangers.

A little Elevation of the Heart is sufficient, a little Remembrance of GOD, an interior Adoration of Him, though one's a marching with Sword in Hand, are Prayers, which however short, are nevertheless most acceptable to GOD, and are so far from lessening a Soldier's Courage in the most dangerous Exploits, that they strengthen and add to it.

Let him think then on GOD as much as he can. Let him gradually habituate himself to this small, but pious Exercise; no Body sees any thing of it, and there is nothing easier than to reiterate these little internal Adorations throughout the Day. Recommend to him, if You please, that he think on GOD in the way I have directed, as much as possibly he can:

108 *Letters of Nicolas Herman.*

'Tis very proper and most necessary for a Soldier, who is daily exposed to the Dangers of Life, and very often of his Salvation. I hope GOD will assist him and all the Family, whom I salute, being their's, and in particular

Your's, &c.

O^{Rob.} 12.
1688.



Eighth Letter,

To the Reverend Mother N.

Concerning wandering Thoughts in Prayer.

My Reverend Mother,

YOU tell me nothing that's new. You are not the only Person that is tossed with wandering Thoughts. Our Mind is very roving, but our Will being the Mistress of all our other Faculties, she should recall the Mind, and carry it to GOD as it's last End.

When the Mind, for Want of being well reduced and recollected in GOD at the Beginning, has contracted any bad Habits of Dissipation, and wandering; they are afterwards difficultly conquered, and generally they carry us, maugre our own Wills to earthly Things.

I believe that one Cure for this is, to confess our Faults, and to humble ourselves before GOD. I do not however advise You to much speaking and tedious Reasonings in Prayer; these long Discourses being often the Occasions of wandring. Keep Yourself then before GOD in this Exercise, like a poor dumb Creature, or like a Paralitick at a rich Man's Gate. Be carefull to keep Your Mind in the LORD's Presence: If at any Time it strays away, and retires from Him, be not uneasy; these Troubles and Uneasinesses, when we dwell long upon them, serve rather to distract than recollect the Soul. It is the Will that must bring it back in Tranquillity; and if You proceed in this Manner, GOD will have Pity on You.

One Way to recall the Mind easily during the Time of Prayer, and to keep it more in Tranquillity, is, not to let it soar too far throughout the Day: You should keep it exactly in the Presence of GOD; and being once well accustomed to think often on Him, You will find it easy to keep Your Mind calm and serene in the Time of Your Devotions, at least to recall it from it's Wandrings.

I have told You already at some length in my former Letters, of the Advantages we may draw from this Practice of the Presence of GOD. Let us set about it seriously, and pray for one another. I recommend myself to the Prayers of Sister N. and the Reverend Mother N. and I am in our Lord, &c.

Ninth

Ninth Letter,**To the same Person.**

I Send You herewith an Answer to the Letter I received from our good Sister N.— Take the Trouble to deliver it. She seems to be of very good Dispositions, but she would go faster than Grace leads her. One does not become holy all at once. I recommend her to You. We should assist one another by our Advice, but much more by our good Examples. You'll oblige me to let me hear of her from Time to Time, and whether she be very fervent. and obedient.

Let us often reflect, *my dear Mother*, that our only Business in this Life is to please GOD ; that perhaps every other Thing is but Folly and Vanity. We have spent upwards of forty Years in * Religion: Have we employed them in loving and serving GOD, who by His Mercy has called us to this State, and for that very End? I am filled with Shame and Confusion, when on the one hand I reflect on the great Favours which GOD has done, and incessantly continues to do me; and on the other, upon the bad Use I have made of them, and my small Progress in the Way of Perfection.

But

* That is, in a Monastick Life.

But since by His Mercy He allows us still a little more Time, let us begin heartily, redeem our lost Time, and return with an entire Confidence to this Father of Mercies, who is always ready to receive us lovingly. Let us renounce, *my dear Mother*, let us generously renounce, for the Love of Him, every Thing that's not Himself. He merits infinitely more. Let us incessantly think of Him, and place all our Trust in Him. I doubt not but we shall very soon find the Effects of it, and shall relish the abundance of His Graces; with which we can do all Things, and without which we can do nothing but sin.

We cannot escape the Rocks and Dangers that we must meet with in this Life, without the actual and continual Assistance of GOD. Let us perpetually pray for it. But how can we pray for it, without being with Him? And how can we be with Him, without we think often on Him? And how can we think often on Him, but by accustoming ourselves to a holy Habit of it? You will say, *That I am always telling you the same Thing*: 'Tis true I know no Method more proper or easy than this; and as I practise no other myself, I advise all the World to it. We must *know* before we can *love*; and in order to *know* GOD, we must often *think* of Him: And when we come to *love* Him, we shall then *also think* very often on Him; *For where our Treasure is, there will our Hearts be also*. Let us then think often and well of Him. I am

March 28.

Your's, &c.

1689.

Tenth

Tenth Letter,

To Madam N.

Madam,

I Have had some Struggle with myself before I could think of writing to Mr. N. — and I do it now, purely because You and Madam ——— desire it. Please then to take the Trouble to address it, and send it to him. I am very much satisfied to know of the great Confidence You have in GOD: I pray He may increase it in You more and more. We cannot confide too much in so good and faithfull a Friend, who never will disappoint us in this or the World to come.

If Mr. ——— knows but how to improve by the Loss he has sustained, and place all his Hope and Trust in GOD, He will very soon give him another Friend, that's both more powerfull and of more upright Intentions towards him. He disposes of Hearts as He pleases. Perhaps he had too great a liking and Attachment to the Person he has lost. We should love our Friends, but without encroaching on the Love of GOD, which ought to have the first Room in our Heart. I beseech You to remember what I have recommended to You, which is to think often of GOD both by Day and Night, in all Your Occupations, and even amidst Your Diversions. He is al-
ways

ways about You and with You. Leave Him not alone. You would think it uncivil to leave a Friend alone that was making You a Visit ; Why then must GOD be neglected and left in this Manner ? Do not then forget Him, think often of Him, adore Him incessantly, live and die with Him. This is the glorious Occupation of a Christian ; in a word, it is our Profession. If we know not so much, we must learn it : I shall assist You with my Prayers ; and I am in our Lord,

Your's, &c.

Paris, Octob. 29.
1689.



Eleventh Letter,

To the Reverend Mother N.

My Reverend and much Honoured Mother,

I Do not ask of GOD, that He would deliver You from Your Pains ; but I earnestly pray, He would give You Strength and Patience to bear them as long as He pleases. Comfort Yourself with Him, who keeps You tied to the Cross : He will let You go when He thinks fit. Happy are they who suffer with Him. Use Yourself to such Sufferings,
P and

114 *Letters of Nicolas Herman.*

and beg of Him Strength to endure as much as He pleases, and as long as He thinks it necessary for You. The Men of the World do not comprehend these Truths; nor do I wonder at it, because they suffer in the Spirit of the World, and not as Christians: They consider Maladies as the Pains of Nature, and not as the Favours of GOD; and so looking on them in this Light, they find nothing but what's opposite and rude to Nature. But such who consider these and the like Troubles as coming from the Hand of GOD, as the Effects of His Mercy, and the Means He uses for their Salvation, generally taste great Sweetness and sensible Consolations in them.

I wish You could be perswaded, that GOD is often nearer You in Times of Sickness and Infirmary, than when You enjoy perfect Health. Seek no other Physician; for, as I conceive, He desires Himself to cure You. Put then all Your Trust in Him, and You'll soon find the good Effects of it; which very often we retard, by our relying on Medicines more than on GOD.

Whatever Remedies You make use of, they will only have their Effect as far as He permits. When such Troubles come from GOD, He only can cure them. He frequently afflicts us with bodily Maladies, to heal those of the Soul. Comfort Yourself with the sovereign Physician both of Soul and Body.

I am aware that You'll tell me, *That I am very much at my Ease, and that I eat and drink*
at

at the LORD's Table. You are indeed in the right: But do You imagine it would be a very small Trouble to the greatest Criminal in the World to eat at the King's Table, and be served by his own Hand, and in the mean Time to have no Assurance of Pardon? I do believe he would feel a vast Uneasiness, and such as nothing could moderate, but only the Confidence he had in the Goodness of his Sovereign. In like manner I can assure You, that whatever Sweetness I find in eating and drinking at the Table of my King, yet my Sins that are always before me, as well as the Uncertainty of my Pardon, torment me, tho' in Truth, Affliction is agreeable to me. Be content with the State that GOD assigns You. However happy You may think me, I envy You. Sorrows and Sufferings would be a Paradise to me, if I should but suffer with GOD; and the greatest Pleasures would be a Hell to me, could I relish them without Him. My whole Delight would be to suffer something for His Sake.

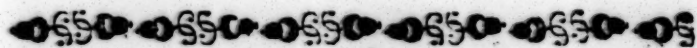
I am now within a little Time of going to GOD, I mean of rendring an Account to Him. If I but saw GOD for a Moment, the Sufferings of a middle State would be easy, tho' they should last to the End of the World. What comforts me in this Life, is, that I now see GOD by *Faith*; and I see Him in such a manner, as might make me say sometimes, *I no more believe, but I see.* I have the Experience of what Faith teaches us; and upon

this Assurance and this Practice of Faith, I will live and die with Him.

Keep Yourself then always with GOD: 'Tis the only Support in all our Afflictions. I shall beg of Him to be with You. I salute the Reverend Mother Prioress, and commend myself to her good Prayers, to those of Your holy Society, and to Your own; and I am in our Lord,

Your's, &c.

November 17.
1690.



Twelfth Letter,

To the Reverend Mother N.

My Reverend Mother,

SINCE You so earnestly desire, that I should communicate to You the Method I have followed in attaining to this State of the *Presence of GOD*, to which our Lord, by His Mercy and Goodness, has brought me: I must tell You, that 'tis with a great deal of Reluctancy I have complied with Your Importunity, but still with this Condition, *that You impart my Letter to no Body*; for if I knew that You would show it, all the Desire I have for Your Perfection would not determine me to send it. Follows then all that I can say on this Subject:

Ha-

Having found in variety of Books different Methods of going to GOD, and various Practices of the spiritual Life; I thought this would rather perplex my Mind, than facilitate what I was in search of; which was nothing else, but what Method I should take to be wholly devoted to GOD. This made me resolve to give All for All: So after having given myself wholly to GOD; to make all the Satisfaction I could for my Sins, I renounced, for the Love of GOD, every Thing that was not GOD, and I began to live as if there was none but He and I in the World. Sometimes I considered myself before Him as a poor Criminal at the Feet of his Judge; at other times I looked upon Him in my Heart as my Father, as my GOD. There I worshipped Him the oftneft I could, keeping my Mind in His holy Presence, and recollecting it as often as I found it wandring from Him. I had no small Trouble in this Exercise, which however I carried on, notwithstanding all the Difficulties I met with in it, without disquieting or troubling myself when my Mind had wandred involuntarily. I made this my Business as much all the Day long as at the stated Hours of Prayer; for at all Times, every Hour, every Moment, in the throng of my Business, I banished and drove away from my Mind every Thing that was capable of carrying my Thoughts from GOD.

This now, my Reverend Mother, has been my common Practice since I first entred upon a religious Life; and tho' I have done it very indolently and imperfectly, yet I have reaped very great Advantages by it. I am very sensible we should attribute these to the Mercy
and

and Goodness of the LORD, because we can do nothing without Him, and I still less than any other. But when we are faithfull to keep ourselves in His holy Presence, and to set Him always before us; this not only keeps us from offending Him, and doing any thing that may displease Him, at least voluntarily, but likewise encourages us in taking a holy Freedom to ask of Him all those Graces we stand in need of.

In fine, by frequently reiterating these Acts, they become more familiar to us, and the *Presence of GOD* becomes as it were *natural* to us. Return Him Thanks (if You please) together with me, for His great Goodness in my Behalf, which I can never sufficiently admire, and for the Multitude of these Graces He has vouchsafed so miserable a Sinner as I am. Praised be He in all Things. I am,

Your's, &c.



Thirteenth Letter,

To the same.

My good Mother,

IF we were well accustomed to the Exercise of the *Presence of GOD*, our very bodily Dis-eases would sit lighter upon us. **GOD** often per-

permits that we should suffer a little for the Purification of our Soul, and to oblige us to continue with Him. I cannot conceive how a Soul that's with GOD, and who desires nothing but Him, should be capable of Pain. I have so much Experience of this, as not to doubt of it.

Take Courage. Offer Him incessantly Your Troubles; beg of Him Strength to bear them. Above all, accustom Yourself to converse often with Him, and forget Him as little as possible. Adore Him in Your Infirmities; offer them up to Him from Time to Time: And in Your most violent Sufferings, beg of Him humbly and affectionately (as a Child does his Father) a Conformity to His holy Will, and the Succours of His Grace. You shall have the Assistance of my poor and mean Prayers.

GOD has many Ways of drawing us to Himself. He sometimes hides Himself from us; but *Faith* alone, which will never fail us in our Necessities, ought to be our Support, and the Foundation of that Confidence which we should have solely in GOD.

I know not what GOD will do with me. I am still the more satisfied. The whole World suffers; and yet I, who ought to do rigorous Penances, feel in myself such great and continual Joys, that I can scarce moderate them

I would willingly beg of GOD to bear a part of Your Sufferings, did I not know my own Weakness, which is so great, that if He
but

120 *Letters of Nicolas Herman.*

but left me one Minute to myself, I should be the most miserable of all Creatures. And yet I know not how He can leave me alone, because *Faith* points Him out directly, and brings me close up with Him, and He never leaves us, till we leave Him first. Let us be afraid to forsake Him. Let us be always with Him. Let us live and die in His Presence. Pray for me, as I do for You. I am,

Your's, &c.

*November 28.
1690.*



fourteenth Letter,

To the same.

My good Mother,

I Am very much troubled to see You suffer so long. What sweetens the feeling I have of Your Sorrows, is, that they are the Evidences of the Love that GOD has for You. Look on them in this Light, and You'll bear them the more easily. 'Tis my Opinion You let alone humane Remedies, and abandon Yourself intirely to divine Providence. 'Tis very likely GOD waits only for this Resignation and perfect Reliance on Him, to cure You; for You see, that notwithstanding all
Your

Your Care, the Remedies have not had the desired Effect; on the contrary, Your Malady increases: for You can never tempt GOD by resigning Yourself into His Hands, and waiting for every Thing from Him.

I told You in my last, *That sometimes He permits bodily Diseases, for the Cure of our spiritual Maladies.* Be of good Courage then. Make a Vertue of Necessity. Pray to GOD, not so much to be delivered from bodily Pains, as for Strength to suffer resolutely for His Love what and how long soever He pleases.

These Prayers verily are hard to Nature, but most acceptable to GOD, and sweet to those that love Him. Love sweetens Troubles, and when we love GOD, we suffer for His Sake with Joy and Courage. Do so then, I beseech You. Comfort Yourself with Him, who is the sole and only Remedy of all our Evils: He is the Father of the afflicted, always ready to help us. He loves us infinitely more than we imagine. Love Him then, and seek no other Comfort elsewhere. I hope You'll soon receive it. Adieu. I shall help You with my poor Prayers, and shall continue in our Lord,

Your's, &c.

A little below are these Words,

This Morning being St. Thomas's Day, I received the Holy Sacrament, for the Purposes hinted at in Your's.

Q

ffif

Fifteenth Letter,

To the same.

My dear Mother,

I Thank GOD for the small Respite He has given You, according to Your Desire I have been very often near expiring, tho' at the same Time I was never more contented. Accordingly I never prayed for any Relief, but for Strength only to suffer with Courage, Humility and Love. Take Courage, *my dear Mother*. Ah! how sweet is it to suffer with GOD? Let the Sufferings be never so great, You must receive them with Love. It is a Paradise to suffer and to be with Him; and therefore if in this Life we would enjoy the Peace of Paradise, we must accustom ourselves to a familiar, humble and affectionate Conversation with Him. We must keep our Mind from wandering from Him on any Account whatever. We must make our Heart a spiritual Temple, wherein we may incessantly adore Him. We must unweariedly watch over ourselves, so as to do, say and think on nothing which may displease Him.

When thus we are employed with GOD, our Sufferings will be attended with nothing but Sweetnesses, Unctions and Consolations.

I know, that in arriving to this State, the Beginning is very difficult, and that we must
act

act purely in Faith : But at the same Time we know, that we can do all Things by the Grace of our Lord; for He never refuses it to all such as importunately demand it of Him. Knock at the Gate ; continue knocking, and I answer for it He will open to You in His own Time, if Your Behaviour be right, and will grant You all at once what He has delayed doing for many Years. Adieu Pray to GOD for me, as I do for You. I hope to see Him quickly ; and I am in our Lord,

Your's, &c.

January 22.
1691.



Sixteenth Letter,

To the same Person.

My good Mother,

GOD knoweth abundantly well what is fit for us, and all that He does is certainly for our Good. We should be always ready to receive equally from His Hand both what's sweet and bitter; and even the hardest and most painfull Things should be agreeable to us. The sorest Troubles would never appear intolerable, did we but set them in a true
Q 2 Light.

Light. And when once we come to be persuaded, that 'tis the Hand of GOD which acts upon us, that 'tis a Father full of Love who reduces us to a State of Humiliation, Sorrow and Sufferings; all the Bitterness that is in these Things is immediately removed, and they have *then* nothing but Consolation in them.

Let us make it our Business throughly to *know* GOD. The more one *knows* Him, the more he desires to *know* Him. And as Love is generally the Measure of *Knowledge*, the deeper and more extensive our *Knowledge* is; so much the greater will our *Love* be: And if our *Love* to GOD were great, we should equally love Him in Troubles and Consolations.

Let us not content ourselves to seek or to love GOD for these His sensible Favours, how elevated and sublime soever they are which He has already, or may afterwards vouchsafe us: These Favours, however great they may be, will never bring us so near Him as Faith does by one simple Act. Let us often seek Him by the Means of this Grace. He is within us. Let us not seek Him elsewhere. Are we not highly rude and blame-worthy, to leave Him alone, and take up our Time with Trifles that displease Him, and perhaps offend Him? Nevertheless He suffers them: But 'tis to be feared they will one Day cost us very dear.

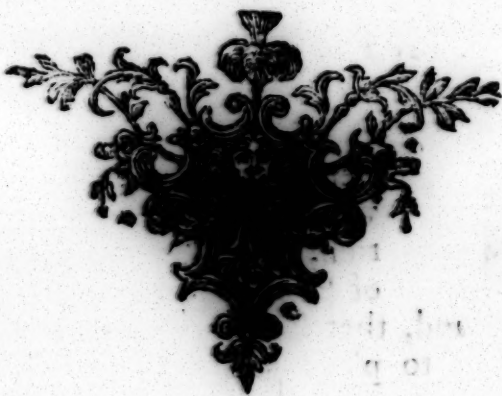
Let us begin to be devoted to Him in good earnest, and banish from our Heart and Spirit

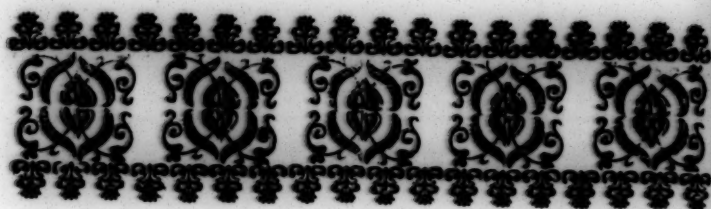
rit every Thing which is not GOD. He desires to be there alone. Beg this Favour of Him ; and if we act our Part, as we can, we shall quickly see that happy Change on ourselves which we look for. I cannot enough thank Him for the small Respite He has vouchsafed You. I hope in His Mercy the Favour to see Him in a few Days. Let us pray one for another. I am in our Lord,

Your's, &c.

February 6.
1691.

The End of the Letters.





MEDITATIONS

ON THE

LORD's *Prayer.*

The INTRODUCTION.

TIS a Saying of one of the Antients, That that Eloquence which did not breed Admiration, deserved not the Name of *Eloquence*; making us thereby understand, that such is the Faculty of humane Wit, to plead and reason with such Force and Art, as to draw the Admiration of all the Hearers. If humane Wit can arrive at such Perfection, what must be the Perfection O Lord GOD of Thy Works? And if Thy Power, Goodness and Wisdom, have so much Advan-

Advantage over the Wisdom of Men ; How much greater and more admirable must Thy Works be than their's ? Thus, O my GOD, I understand that naturally Thou dost Thy Works, so as no Tongue can express, nor Understanding conceive, nor Praises extoll. Thy Works must be still consistent with Thee : And as Thou art infinitely wise, powerfull and good, and consequently incomprehensible ; thus likewise must Thy Works be after their kind, chiefly Thy Goodness and Mercy, which Thou wouldst have most priz'd and regarded, in such manner, that all Understandings which will advert to them with Attention, must be astonished and out of themselves. For if it thus happened to the Queen of *Sheba*, admiring the Works of *Solomon*, (who was but a mortal Man as we are;) How much more stupendous are the Works of that infinite Wisdom and Goodness, which reigns for ever ? Into this Account of Thy Works, enter the Mystery of the sacred Incarnation of Thy only begotten Son ; also that of His Passion, and the Institution of the holy Sacrament which He left with us. To this add, that a GOD of so much Majesty and Greatness should adopt us for Sons, and offer Himself to be our Father : For thus His only begotten Son hath commanded us to call Him, and gives Him that Name through the whole Gospel, saying in one place, *Your Father knoweth what Things you have need of* In another, *Behold the Birds of the Air they sow not, neither do they reap, &c. and your Father feedeth them,*

them. Elsewhere 'tis said, It is not the Will of your Father, that any of these little ones should perish. In another, he bids tell his Disciples, Behold I go to my Father and your Father, to my GOD and your GOD. For this Cause the Apostle says, He is not ashamed to call you Brethren, saying, LORD, I'll preach thy Name to my Brethren.

This is the great Dignity that the Son has obtained and merited for us by His Incarnation and Passion, which the same Apostle intimates, saying, GOD sent his Son into the World, born of a Woman, and made obedient to the Law, to redeem those who live under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of the Sons of GOD. And because you are Children, GOD has shed abroad the Spirit of his Son in your Hearts; who with intire hearty Affection incites you with your whole Hearts to call Him, Father, Father: In such manner, that He not only gives us the Name of Sons, but likewise the Spirits and Hearts of Sons, inspiring us with the same Spirit which more eminently dwells in Himself; that by likewise dwelling in us, we might be made Partakers of that glorious Title and Dignity. St. John confirms the same, saying, To all such as receive Christ, did he give Power to become the Children of GOD. Such as receive this Dignity, do no longer live according to the Appetites and Desires of Flesh and Blood, but with that Purity and Holiness which becomes the Sons of GOD. And that we might not imagine, that the Dignity of Father was only a Name, and not Deed and Love; Thy Son adds,

adds, saying, *You shall call no Man on Earth Father, for one only is your Father who is in Heaven.* Giving us to understand, that in comparison of Thy paternal Love and providential Care of Men, all other Loves and paternal Cares are of no account; for 'tis plain that no other Father has proposed to us so much Good as Thou, neither has done so much for our Sakes as Thou hast done: for Thou hast designed us for Thy Glory, and delivered over to Death Thy Son for to give it us. Therefore it was with great Reason *David* said, *When my Father and Mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.* And the Prophet *Isaias*, *Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O LORD, art our Father, our Redeemer, &c.* And Thou LORD by the same Prophet sayest, *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they have forgotten, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the Palms of my Hands: Thy Ways are continually before me.*

First Meditation.*Our Father.*

CONFORMABLY to Thy great and ineffable Mercy, Thou permittest, and Thy only begotten Son commands, that we should pray, saying, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* O Royal Word! O sweet Word! O Word of inestimable Consolation and Devotion! Who should dare, O LORD, to design Thee so, unless Thy dear Son had given us Leave? Who art Thou, O LORD, and what are we to dare call thee *Father*? Thou art what Thou art. I'm not what I am. In Presence of Thy Creation, and before Thee, I am nothing. What greater Wonder, what greater Mercy, that Thou a GOD of infinite Majesty, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Holy of Holies, GOD of Gods, the Glory of Angels, the Joy of the Happy; art pleased to be my Father, and to adopt me for a Son: me who am the vilest Mire, a poor Worm, and a most perverse Creature. O marvelous Piety! O the Length, the Breadth, the Height, the Depth, of the Love and Goodness of GOD! *Our Father*! O Word of Comfort! O Word of Love! O Word of Confidence! What shall we render unto Thee, O LORD, for Thy Favours? With what Words shall we extoll Thy Mercy? What Un-

Understanding must not stand astonished at the Thoughts of so much Bounty? *Our Father!* O inestimable Joy! O ineffable Sweetness, to dare call Thee *Father!* What Honey so sweet? What Milk so soft? What more could'st Thou, O LORD, do for us? And what more can we desire, than that Thou should'st be our Father? O how sensible must Thy beloved Evangelist have been of this, when he said, *Behold what Manner of Love it was which he bore to us, to be called the Sons of GOD,* and to be such; that is, He was not contented with giving us the Title of *Children of GOD,* but the being of Children: And to be for certain, *Our Father,* since there is no Father, but that there must be a Child, nor Child without a Father: In such sort, that the Father took us for Children, and the Son for Brethren, and the Holy Ghost for his living and sacred Temples. What greater Glory, what greater Dignity than this? A Philosopher said, *That the sweetest Thing in the World was Gain; for all humane Labours were sweetened with it.* If the greatest of all Gains be to have GOD for *Our Father,* not nominally only, but likewise effectually and in reality; What can there be in the World more sweet and desirable than this? This Word strikes the Heart, moves and unites the Bowels, regales the Spirit, comforts the inner Man, rejoices the Soul, and makes Floods of Tears to flow.

Our Father! O compendious Word! The Abridgment of what GOD has done upon Earth! The Apostle said, *That he knew nothing*
R 2 *but*

but Christ and him crucified: And he said so with great Reason; for in this Mystery is comprehended all that can be known: I, LORD, after this Knowledge do not desire to know more than this Word *Our Father*. Here I'll read; here I'll study: On this I'll meditate Night and Day; for it is sufficient for me. 'Tis said, *That Man is the lesser World; for in him is the Compend or Abridgment of the greater*: After the same manner, these Words may be called the *Abridgment of Knowledge*, because therein you'll find comprised all that the holy Scriptures teach; which may be divided into two principal Parts: One is, Promises; the other Requests or Prayers. The last is, requesting Man to fulfill and perform his Duty to GOD. The first is promising to obedient Man the Favour and Mercies of GOD. Thus the one teaches us what we ought to do; the other what we ought to hope for. What Promises are there which are not comprehended under the Name of *Father*? And what Obligations are there which are not implied in the Word *Son*? For what Goods, what Mercies, what provident Care am I not to hope for from one that I truly call *Father*? 'Tis a natural Consequence of being my Father, to love me, to provide for me, to direct me, to give me Help, to defend me, to give me Counsel, to take Care of me, to instruct me, to give me Honour, to give me Inheritance; and when 'tis necessary, to chastise me: For what Son is there whom his Father doth not chasten? To live then under the

the Tuition and providential Care of such a Father, is a sweet State, a free Servitude, perfect Protection, joyfull Fear, gentle Chastisement, rich Poverty, and secure Possession : For the Father takes upon him all the Cares, and divides the Fruit with the Children. Further, if this Father is the Almighty GOD, Lord of all the Creation ; What can I want, having such a Father ? For the Children have Interest and a Share in all the Father's Goods. What Tribulation, what Tempest can arise to disturb me, having such a Father ? If my Enemies persecute me, He will defend me. If earthly Goods or Riches leave me, He will provide for me. If I am vexed with perplexing Doubts, He'll instruct me. If I walk in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death, He will accompany me. If false Witnesses arise against me, He will answer for me. If Armies should join against me, I'll not be afraid ; for Thou LORD art with me. What greater Glory, what greater Honour, what greater Mercy than this ? The first Dignity in the World is to be the Son of GOD by Generation ; the next is to be His Son by Grace : And because there could not be possibly more than one by Generation, Thou LORD hast put us in the second Place, that is, to be Thy Sons by Adoption or Grace, above which there is no conceivable Dignity ; whereby it appears, that all Thy Promises complexly are comprehended in this Word. This goes even a Step further, and says more than all the Promises : For 'tis much more,
that

that Thou, O LORD, makest Thyself *Our Father*, than every Thing else that Thou can'st give would be without That; for Thou being Father and we Sons, we are Heirs of Thy Goods and Portioners of Thy Riches with Thy only begotten Son.

This Word equally instructs us what we ought to do, and what we are to hope for. As Thou art my Father, so likewise am I Thy Son, not in Word or Nominally, but also in Deed and Reality: Whence it follows, that I am obliged to do the Work and Duty of a Son, as Thou dost that of a Father. This being the Case of Consequence, I ought to love Thee as a Father, to serve Thee as a Father, to obey Thee as a Father, put all my Hope in Thee as my true Father. In all my Necessities, to have Recourse to Thee my charitable and bountifull Father, with Zeal to procure Thy Honour as the Honour of my Father, to serve Thee with a most pure Intention, out of pure Love, as a Servant and Son doth his Father; commit myself intirely into Thy Hands, as in the Hands of a Father; cheerfully to suffer all Thy Chastisements, as the Chastisements of a Father, and finally to cast all my Cares and Thoughts on Thee, as my true Father. O LORD, all this I am in Justice bound to as a Son, and all this I owe to Thee as my true Father. And as these make the Summary of what the Scriptures teach, it follows that in this Word I have all that Doctrine abridg'd; and here I have Subject to study all my Life.

This

This will appear more clearly, by joining the other Word, saying [*Our*] *Father*; for Thy only begotten Son would not that we should say *My*, nor will you in this whole Prayer find *My* but *Our*, because He would extend and communicate the Glory of this Dignity to all; that all might be by Grace what He only was by Generation. Further, by saying *Our Father*, we clearly acknowledge that we are all Brethren, as Children of the same Father, and so we ought to love them as Brethren, and Thee as our common Father. Thus it appears that in these two Words we have recommended to us the Love of GOD and of our Neighbour, in which two Duties consist the whole Law and the Prophets. What Doctrine can there be more high or more compendious than this, which in two Words teacheth so clearly all that we need to know?

Moreover these two Words not only teach what I ought to hope, what I ought to do; but they likewise open the Door to Repentance, and the Hopes of Pardon, which my Crimes had shut. Neither will I be dismayed or discouraged because of my Sins, but rather imitate the Example of the prodigal Son: I will return to Thee, my Father, with the same Words and Confession that he returned, saying, *Father, I have sinned against Heaven and against Thee*. This Son having received the Share which fell to him of the Inheritance, having departed from Thee, presently wasted it; for here end all Riches possessed without being

being provided by such a Father : In such manner, that Riches without Thee impoverish a Son, throw him out of the Bosom of his Father, thrust him out of his House, banish him from his native Country, rob him of his Reputation, prostitute his Chastity, and make him a Keeper of Swine ; that his Misery might teach him what an ill Thing he did in leaving his Father's House, and that by the Evils he suffered, he might know the Good he lost. Then this miserable Creature returning to himself, begins to say, *How many hired Servants live in Plenty in my Father's House, and here I perish for Hunger ?* He returned to himself, that he might return to his Father, because he departed from himself before he left his Father. He went off (and very far) from himself ; for having lost the Dignity of a Son, he lost that of a Man, and came to make himself like the Beasts : His Walk and Entertainment was in common with them. This miserable Creature returning to himself, whence he had gone so very far, resolves he'll return to see his Father : But with what Offering, with what Countenance, with what Hope, does he return to him ? With none other than knowing that this is my Father. Tho' I lost the Dignity of Son, he never lost the Tenderness or Character of Father. Then the Father when he saw his Son, covered his Sins, dissembled the Person of a Judge, to do the Office of a Father, and his Indignation turned into Forgiveness, desiring that his Son might turn to him, and not perish ; and coming

ming to him, he threw his Arms about him, and gave him the Kiss of Peace. He presently ordered, that forthwith the best Raiment should be brought, and he cloathed therewith. He did not say, Whence came you? Where have you been? What have you done with these Things you carried off? Why did you exchange so much Honour for so great Ignominy and Disgrace?

The Strength of his Love will not let him see the Son's Faults. The Father knows not what flow Mercy is: Presently he orders that a Ring be put upon his Finger; for not contented to restore him to his Innocency, he would ennoble him with the Mark of Honours. He orders that the Son get Shoes, that he may turn to the Paths of Righteousness which he had forgot, and that he might see the Poverty to which he had brought himself, by flying from his Father: for at his Return he had no Shoes. Further, he commanded that the fattest Calf should be killed; for contented with nothing less, he would honour the Feast of this Reconciliation, and therein declare the Riches and Abundance of his Charity towards this Son. I am now moved, O LORD, by this Example, and drawn with so great a Proof of Thy Love. After all my Strayings and Wandrings, with all possible Humility and Modesty, I come to Thee, O LORD, saying with this Prodigal, *Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy Sight; I deserve not to be called thy Son, make me as one of the hired Servants of thy House.* These Words, O
S LORD,

LORD, I'll say ; and if I say them with the same Heart he did, I hope that before I have done pronouncing them, Thou wilt meet me in the Way, Thou wilt cast Thy Arms about me, and give me the Kifs of Peace. This I hope from the Bowels of a Father drawing to himself a lost Son. He as a true Father never ceaseth to admonish us, to give us Counsel, to put us in the right Road, and to protect us in it : For as one that desires to see the Day, does not seek a Light, because the Day has Light sufficient to such as will but look at it ; just so, whoever will lift up his Eyes to Heaven, and look to the Father, He will never miss of that sovereign and resplendent Light which communicates itself to all.



Second Meditation.

Which art in Heaven.

AFter the first Words, which are, *Our Father*, follow these no less sweet, nor less rich, nor less compendious, than the first. For if Thou LORD, who art my GOD, and my Father, and my Inheritance, *art in Heaven* ; What do I look for on Earth, while my Treasure is in Heaven ? And if Thou my Father *art in Heaven*, it follows that I am a Stranger and Pilgrim in this World, and

and that I have no permanent City, but that I should search for the true one. And seeing a Stranger who travels to his native Country, has only his Body on the Road, but his Heart and Thoughts are in the Country where his House is : I being a Stranger ; while separated from Thee, where can my Heart and my Desires be but in Thee ?

These same Words strengthen my Confidence, and secure my Portion : For if Thou my Father *art in Heaven*, then I have Right to Heaven ; I have already one Foot in that Habitation, since Thou art there, and Lord of it. Where should Children be but where their Father is ? Where should the Members be but where their Head is ? The Father never excludes from his House those that are to partake the Title and Inheritance of Children.

These same Words elevate and raise my Soul above all worldly Things. What can give greater Contentment, what greater Glory while living on Earth, than to have our Father in Heaven, and that He is King of Heaven ? O ye who desire Honour and Glory ! where do ye go seeking Glory, a Smoke which the Wind blows away, and neglect so great Glory as to be the Sons of the King of Heaven ? If ye believe not this, how are you Christians ? And if ye do believe, why go ye seeking with Anxiety these vain Glories, which flie from you, and leave the true, which is so freely and gratuitously offered ? Rejoice in the LORD, be glad ye just, and
§ 2 glory

glory in the LORD all ye of pure Hearts, for you have your Reward in Heaven, having there GOD for your Father. I would, O LORD, take the Wings of an Eagle, and leaving the low Things of the Earth, flie to Thee on High : For how can I esteem any earthly Thing, while I perceive that I am an Heir of Heaven ? How can I hold my Face either to the beastly Pleasures of this World, or to the perishing Riches of this Earth, when made by Thee my Father a Possessor of Heaven ? This is more dishonourable and disgracefull in me, than that the Son of a great King should go to clean Dunghills or curry Horses. And if a Prince (before he inherits) because of the Right he has to his Father's Kingdom, is so much regarded and esteemed over the whole Kingdom, I having the same Right, on the Word of the living GOD, not to a perishing and unsecure Kingdom on Earth, but to that of Heaven ; Why may I not presently reckon myself rich and happy with such a Right and Hope ?



Third Meditation.

Hallowed be Thy Name.

O How fitly does this Petition follow what preceeds ! For if, O LORD, I am received as Thy Son ; What have I

I to do more than to seek the Glory of Thy Name, the Coming of Thy Kingdom, and the Accomplishment of Thy holy Will? For what's the asking these Things other than (having received that new Dignity) presently to take Possession of it, and executing directly what belongs to a Son to do? For how soon one is elected a King, or into any high Office, he presently takes Possession of that Dignity, and begins to hear the Cases which belong to that Office: Thus, O LORD, I having by Thy Grace received this new Dignity, I begin presently to take the Possession and Execution of it, saying and praying for what is proper for the Son of such a Father; namely, to desire and seek that *Thy Name be hallowed*, and the Glory of Thy Kingdom: that is, that in all the World it may be known, adored and glorified. This too is doing my own proper Affair, being certain that the Glory of the Father is likewise that of the Son, as that of a good Son is the Glory of the Father, as the wise Man has it.

If it be so proper and natural for a good Son to love his Father, and that Love transforms the Lover into the Beloved, in such manner, that forgetting one's self, 'tis all his Study to desire and sollicite what the Beloved desires, as if it were another self. What have I to desire, O LORD, from Thee, after being transformed by Love into Thee, but that only which Thou desirest? And since Thou desirest nothing more than the Glory of Thy holy Name (because nothing is more worthy to be de-

desired ;) What have I to do but to desire and sollicite that same Glory? I can well perceive that Thou standest in no Need of this : For tho' the Tongues of Men were silent, all the Creatures (as the Psalmist says) cry out, and publish Thy Glory, and invite us to do the same. For if we look at the Angelick Spirits, they perpetually celebrate Feasts of Glory and continual Praises. If we look at the fearfull Make of the Heavens, and with open Eyes consider their Marvels ; the Concord of such different Elements, the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, the perpetual Springs, the constant Course of the Rivers ; such Difference of Trees, such Diversity of Plants, so many various kinds of Animals, and of other innumerable Things ; and every one with it's peculiar Property and natural Virtue or Quality, that Thou, O LORD, art pleased to give all these Things which we see every Day. What do they say and publish other than the Glory and Magnificence of Thy Name? They proclaim Thee, O LORD, the only true GOD, eternal, immortal, omnipotent, all-wise, all-good, all-mercifull, all-just, all-true, sole-admirable, and who only merits to be infinitely beloved. But of all Thy Creatures, Man is more than all others obliged to hallow and celebrate Thy holy Name ; for having received in himself from Thee the Qualities and Perfections of them all, for he is called the *lesser World* : If each be obliged to hallow and bless Thee for the Part which they have received ; under what Obligations must he be who

who has received all ; for whom what's in this visible World has been created ? I desire therefore with all my Heart, that *Thy Name be hallowed* over the whole World, so as all Nations and Tongues, all States and Conditions of Persons in all Places may combine to praise and glorify Thy holy Name. I do not pray for earthly Riches, nor worldly Honour, nor sensual Delights ; I only pray, that Thy Name may be hallowed and glorified in this World. This shall be my first and chief Petition ; this my first Care and chief Desire, seeing my Love to Thee ought to be the greatest of all Loves : And for this I reckon them most happy, the Inhabitants of Thy Kingdom, because for ever and ever they sing Praises unto Thee.



Fourth Meditation.

Thy Kingdom come.

O LORD ! other Kings, or rather Tyrants, have seized upon us ; the Devil with his Power, the World with it's Pumps, the Flesh with it's Delights and Flat-teries, and our own Wills with their Appetites : All these cruel Lords have tyrannized over us, and withdrawn us from Thy Jurisdic-tion

dition and Kingdom, inciting us always to do their Will, to live conformably to their Laws; forgetfull of Thine. But O King of Heaven, turn LORD for Thy own Honour, and suffer no longer this Tyranny in Thy Kingdom. Let those Tyrants be gone. Arise, O LORD, disperse those Thy Enemies, make all flie who hate Thy Presence. Reign, O LORD, in us. Do Thou alone rule and govern. Let Thy Sceptre and Kingdom only be acknowledged by us. Let Thy Will be our Law, Thy Word our Light, Thy Commands our Joy, Thy Being our Riches, and to suffer for Thee our greatest Glory. Rule us, O LORD, by Thy Providence, defend us by Thy right Hand, guide us by Thy holy Spirit, teach us by Thy Word, govern us by Thy Laws, enrich us by Thy Gifts, and chastise us (when necessary) with Thy mercifull Hand. Let not the World, the Flesh, our own Wills, nor the Devil, find or see any thing in us. Let the Prince of this World be gone, and do Thou LORD only reign in me. Be Thou the sole Ruler. Do Thou only dwell in my Soul. Let all my Heart be taken up and possessed with Thy Kingdom. Be Thou only the Light of my Understanding, and the Comfort of my Will. I seek Thee only, I love Thee only, I desire Thee only. Why do I go running over and distracting myself with a Multiplicity of things, since Thy Kingdom alone is sufficient for me. Grant, O LORD, that from hence forward I may think of nothing else, I may desire nothing

thing else, I may seek nothing else but it. Let it be my Exercise, and let the whole of my Conversation be about it. Thou only art good, Thou only beautifull, Thou only lovely, and a Lover of our Souls : Do Thou therefore, O LORD, rule, possess and direct me ; on Thee I lean my Breast and rest my Heart : I run to Thee, my ultimate End, the Center and Kingdom where pure Souls find their Rest.

Let *Thy Kingdom come* to us, O LORD, which is the End of all our Hopes and the Sum of all our Desires ; whence we may see Thee our King and Father in Thy Beauty, and enjoy Thee for ever in Thy Presence : For how can there be a more natural or proper Desire in Children, than to see their Father in his Kingdom ? When shall I see that Light ? When shall I come and appear before the Face of my GOD ? When shall I see those Palaces of Gold ! those Gardens of eternal Flowers ! those Fountains of Waters ! those Walls and Gates of precious Stones ! that Multitude of Angels ! those Choirs of Virgins following the Lamb wherever he goes ! those Singers who celebrate with perpetual Hymns and Praises the sovereign King and Father of us all ! O Mother *Jerusalem* ! when shall I see thee ? when shall the Day come that I may call at thy Gates of Gold, and see thy Walls inlaid with Jasper, and hear the Sound of thy Musick and Praises ? O how lovely are Thy Tabernacles, O LORD GOD of Hosts ! My Soul faints and is ravished with the Thoughts

T

of

of the Habitation of the LORD. *As the Hart pants for the Fountains of Water, so pants my Soul for Thee my GOD!* This is a Desire that's natural for Children, and the Property of this Water, that it flows toward eternal Life, raising the Heart of Man from the Earth to Heaven. The happy St. Ignatius the Martyr (when he was going to suffer) said these Words, *My Love is crucified, and is not in me: There remains in me a certain Water, which says in me, Go thou to the Father.* This is the common Father we desire, and for whom we sigh in this Place of Banishment, crying out and saying, *Thy Kingdom come.*



Fifth Meditation.

Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.

THIS *Will* (says St. Cyprian) is what Thy only begotten Son did and taught us to do. This *Will* is Humility in Conversation, Firmness in Faith, Modesty in Words, Justice in Actions, Mercy and Tenderness in our Neighbour's Necessities, Regularity and Discipline in our Habits. To do Hurt to no Body, to bear with it when done

done to us, to preserve Peace with our Brethren, to seek GOD with all our Hearts, to love Him as our Father, to fear Him as our GOD, to prefer nothing to the Love of *Christ*; for He preferred nothing to that Love He had for us. Thus far *St. Cyprian*.

This then I desire: This I beg with all my Soul, That in me and by me that *Will* may be done, that I may be intirely Thine, and that I be wholly employed in Thy Service. Let not my Appetites rise upon me. Let me not have any Respect or Regard to my Interest, nor any sensual Attachment to my Friends and Relations, nor to the Opinion of the World, nor to the Affections of Flesh and Blood. Let me not once think of what is sweet or bitter, honourable or dishonourable, easy or difficult; but that in every Thing I may do Thy holy *Will*. Let it only be delightfull and sweet to me, that at all Times and in all Places I may do Thy *Will*. O that I could only comply with all the Service I owe to Thee! Surely LORD could I be torn to Pieces for Thy Honour, 'tis what I ought to wish more than to enjoy all the Delights that can be, unless such Delights redounded more to Thy Glory: So that I should never desire Delights for their own Sake, but for Thy Sake and Service; so that I may never look at any Thing as agreeable to my own Will, but Thine. What greater Thing can I do, what more sweet, what more amiable, than absolutely to fall in with Thy holy *Will*? O what greater Comfort for me, than

to be able to bear any Thing that is bitter, hard and difficult, for Thy Honour! This is the Joy of Angels, the Desire of the Saints, the Delight of the Just, to serve Thee perfectly, and to conform one's self to Thy holy *Will* in every Thing, and to have our Eyes constantly fixed on Thy Honour. I make no Doubt but that the Angels and Saints rejoice more at the Magnificence of Thy Honour, than at the Grandeur of Thy Glory. That Thy *Will* may be perfectly done as in Heaven, so likewise on Earth after such manner. That with all our Hearts we may pursue it, through Honour and Dishonour, through Infamy and good Report, in Prosperity and Adversity, renouncing all other Wills and Regards which are not conformable to Thine: For Thou alone art our GOD, Thou alone (by way of Eminence) *Our Father*, Thou alone art King of Kings and Lord of Lords: To Thee therefore is all Obedience due and profound Reverence for ever and ever. *Amen.*



Sixth Meditation.

Give us this Day our daily Bread.

HOW naturally, O LORD, do the Petitions follow each other! What can Children desire more properly than their

their Father's Honour, the Prosperity of His Kingdom, the fulfilling or Accomplishment of His Will? 'Tis no less proper that Children (especially little ones) should desire Bread from their Father. This Word they'll often repeat when they feel Hunger, with a mournfull Voice. They sollicite and move the Bowels of their Fathers to get the Bread divided among them. Thus, my Father, I as one of Thy little Children, big as to Years, but little in Merit, stung and most sensibly pierced with Hunger and Wants; in the Right of a Son, beg of Thee my Father, Bread to sustain that Life Thou hast given me: In as much as I have two Substances, one corporeal, another spiritual. I pray for Bread from Thee for both: For the corporeal, I pray for the Bread of the Earth; and for the spiritual, the Bread of Heaven, which is the Bread of Angels, who as spiritual Creatures have no other Sustainance but Thee, who art the Food of all spiritual Beings. Also, O my Father, I who for some Time have dwelt in *Egypt*, amidst a Complication of worldly Pleasures, despising that Food of Beasts, do breath and sigh after that Bread of Angels which descended from Heaven. This I search after. this I desire, this I most humbly demand of Thee. O inestimable Grace! O unheard of Mercy! The GOD of Gods, the LORD of Lords, the Reward of the Saints, the Joy of Angels, the Word of the Father, eternal Wisdom, the Light of the World, the Sun of the Heavens, is made my Entertainment and Food. What
can

can I desire more? What can I value or esteem more? Far be it from me, O LORD, to take Delight in any worldly Thing, after having received such delightfull and precious Food; which tho' I cannot always receive sacramentally, yet still ought I to receive it spiritually, resting my Spirit with Love, and a constant Remembrance upon it. 'Tis truly wonderfull that the Heart of Man does not faint with the Sweetness of this Food. And since Thou, O JESUS! hast become my Subsistence and Refreshment, I want only to feed on Thee, and I have an insatiable Desire still to hunger after Thee. If Thy Flavour is sufficient to maintain the whole World, how much more the actual feeding on Thee? If we all live by the Words of Thy Mouth, and are nourished; How much more shall our Souls live by the Sacramental Food of Thy Body. How is it that all our Hearts do not dissolve in Thy Presence? Why do not our Souls rejoice so in Thee, as to forget ourselves and every thing else for the Love of Thee? If earthly Things, and even the Images and Figures of them, do so possess our Hearts as to make us forget Thee; Why does not Thy true and real Presence so surprisngly seize me, as to make me forget the whole World for Thee!

O heavenly Father! give us then that Bread this Day, that just now and at all Times we may possess it. Remember LORD that Thy Son calls this Bread *daily Bread*, and commands us to seek it this Day.

Tell

Tell us, O Holy JESUS, why dost Thou press so to be with us, as to command us to seek and pray for it this Day, and wilt not delay till To-morrow? What see'st Thou in us, that Thou art so inebriated with the Love of us, as not to delay till To-morrow? If the Love Thou bearest to us doth so constrain Thee, that Thou wilt not protract the Time of Thy Coming, but wilt presently be with us, and that Thou gainest nothing by it; How much more ought we vile Worms, and who can gain so much by being with Thee, to insist and press hard to be with Thee, our chief Good, our Mirrour without Spot, and the Joy of Angels? As Thou, O Holy JESUS! by what we perceive here, wiltst not delay this Affair; neither do we desire any further Delay. And seeing Thou commandest that we should not pray for To-morrow, but *this Day*; We, O LORD, pray for it this Day, and this Day we hope to obtain it; otherwise Thy Doctrine would not be consequential, if we prayed for it this Day, and could not obtain it this Day. Therefore since we desire it presently, and would instantly possess Thee, and that Thou hast the same Desire; Come, O LORD, into our Hearts, which breath and sigh after Thee. Thou LORD art inflam'd with Love to us, and our Hearts with Love to Thee: And since the Weight of Love carries Thee to us, and us to Thee; Grant, O LORD, that setting aside all Impediments, my Soul may embrace Thee with so great Love, that it may faint in Thy Arms
with

with the Taste of Thy ineffable Sweetness. And as Thou LORD willest that we should daily pray and supplicate Thee (Thou being willing to be always with us) we likewise wish to be with Thee, and never separated from Thee, thou sweetest Food and most beloved Spouse of all pure Souls.



Seventh Meditation.

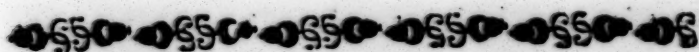
And forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors.

O Blessed JESUS ! though thou dost most bountifully and most incessantly offer Thyself daily to us in this Bread, yet I am afraid to draw near to Thee. LORD, I fear the Feast of *Queen Esther*, lest it should happen to me as it did to *Haman*, who (invited to her Table) was hanged on the Gallows for his Crimes : And tho' this is not thy Intention, yet I am afraid, because of my Disposition and the Multitude of my Sins, which are multiplied beyond the Sand of the Sea ; for who can reckon the Number of my vain Thoughts, of my evil Deeds, and of my disorderly Words. The Just can scarce refrain their Tongues. Who then can enumerate their

their Sins of Omission and Neglects? What shall I do, O LORD, in this Conflict; where on the one hand, Thou invitest me to Thy Table, and the Angels call me to it, and Hunger constrains me to desire it; and on the other hand, the Multitude of my Sins restrain and dissuade me? Now I know what I shall do, since Thou givest me Leave to call Thee *Father*, I'll go to Thee with the Repentance and Heart of a Son, and beg Thy Pardon for my Sins, which I justly call *Debts*; for one is justly Debtor for whatever he has stoln from another, and we with whatever we have are Thine, being bound to employ all we have in Thy Service, which far from accomplishing hitherto we have in all Things offended Thee. 'Tis clear and plain we are Thy Debtors, for all the Service and Honour we have denied Thee: Forgive us then, O LORD, these Debts; for Thou commandest that we should ask Forgiveness, O the marvellous Clemency of our GOD, whom we have despised and bartered for such vile low Things! notwithstanding all which He himself commands that we should ask Pardon; and He who is offended invites us to Peace. He was not thus mercifull to the Angels who sinned, who are and still shall continue in their Iniquity. And since Thou LORD hast received so great Satisfaction for our Debts by the Blood of Thy Son, and commandest us to ask Pardon; forgive us, O LORD, our Trespases, as we forgive them who trespass against us. O happy Trespas! O fortunate Debt!

U

Debt! which when forgiven, can be pled before the Judgment-Seat of GOD as a Plea for obtaining our Pardon! We ought not therefore to be sorrowfull or in Pain when Men trespass against us, persecute, and do us all manner of Hurt, but rather to be glad, and to desire such Things; because by forgiving these Trespasses, we shall the more easily obtain Forgiveness: And there is no Cause to doubt, but that this Plea which our Judge and Advocate has taught us, will be of great Weight and Value before GOD. It was for this Cause that King *David* suffered the Railing and injurious Language of *Shimei*, who cursed him; because he understood that this would avail much for obtaining his own Reconciliation with GOD.



Eighth Meditation.

Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil. Amen.

WHAT Profit shall I have, O LORD, for being delivered from my old Debts, if I contract new ones? Of what Benefit is washing, after having touched a dead Body, if immediately after having washed,

washed, I touch one again? Insomuch that if Thou permittest us to be tempted for our Humiliation, for exercising us, for our Patience, for to gain a Crown; and finally, that being afflicted, we may flee to Thee as our Father, Thou wilt not suffer us to be overcome by the Temptation. So great is our Weakness, that we must unavoidably fall without Thy Grace; and after having received Grace, we cannot possibly persevere without Thy special Help. Many receive Grace who get not Perseverance. Thou seest the Contradictions and Enemies we have to struggle with. The Flesh is a familiar, constant and flattering Enemy; the World is deceitfull, lying and treacherous; the Devil cruel, strong, crafty, and much accustomed to fighting.

Being then, O LORD, amidst so many Squadrons of Enemies, among such Favourers of the Flesh, and such Stranglers and Persecutors of the Spirit; What shall become of me, O LORD, if Thou forsakest me? What will become of a Sheep among so many Wolves, and of so weak a Creature among so many Swords of my Enemies? What ought I to do here other than cry to Thee, *My Father*, like a young Swallow, and sigh and mourn like a Dove? What should I do but lift up my Eyes to the Mountains, whence I look for Help? I lift up my Eyes to Thee who dwellest in the Heavens, to Thee I lift my Soul, O my GOD, I hope in Thee, and shall not be confounded. LORD GOD come to

my Help and Relief; delay not, O LORD, to help me: How long wilt Thou forget me, LORD? How long wilt Thou withdraw thy Countenance from me? How long shall my Enemies triumph over me? What is the Number of the Days of thy Servant? When wilt Thou execute Justice on those who persecute me? When shall I be delivered from them all, that I may flie to Thee? When shall it be, that nothing can lead me astray from Thee? When shall I die to every thing, and to myself, and flie to Thee? When shall I forget every thing else, to have my Mind and Thoughts fixed on Thee? When shall every thing besides Thee become vile and unsavoury to me? When shall thy whole Will be towards me? O Father of Mercy! O GOD of all Consolation! be thus mercifull to me, that I may die to all my Appetites, that I may die to myself and to all my Enemies, and live to Thee alone. O Father! O King! O LORD! O my chief Good! O Center of my Soul! let me die in Thee, rest in Thee; let me have no other Glory nor other Treasure than Thee only.

All these Mercies we beg and pray for from Thee, O LORD, for the Sake of thy only begotten Son, who is our Advocate, our Priest, our Sacrifice, and our Mediator with Thee: For we dare not (as thy holy Prophet said) present our Petitions, relying on or confiding in our own Righteousness, but in the Greatness of thy Mercy, and on the Merits of thy Son; for whatever He did and suffered
in

in this World, He suffered for our Sakes. For His Sake we beseech Thee, O LORD, that we may be mercifully delivered and made whole. For Him Thou didst create every thing; and after they were lost, Thou didst recover and restore them. For Him Thou didst create Man after thy Image and Likeness, and for His Sake Thou didst restore that Image and Likeness. He is the Foundation or Ground of our Justification, the Cause of our Merit, the Intercessor in our Prayers, the Advocate of our Cause, and the chief Support of our Hope. For His Sake then, O LORD, we pray for all those Mercies, that what is not due to our Righteousness, may be owing to His Mercy. If there's nothing to be regarded in us, yet there is much to be admired in Him: If on our part there is want of Merit, yet His is most prevalent and superior. For His Sake we pray, for His Sake we supplicate; honour Him in us: For what Thou givest us, Thou givest Him; for what is given to the Members is given to the Head. If we have nothing to offer Thee, but are quite destitute in Thy Presence, we offer Him to Thee with all the Labours and Service He did from the Manger to the Cross; for we partake of all these. In that Right, and with these Offerings, we come to supplicate Thy Mercy and Thy Justice: Justice, with regard to Thy Son; and Mercy, with respect to ourselves.

Above all remember, O LORD, that we are sent to Thee by Thy Son, who commands

mands us to ask in His Name, and has given us distinct intelligible Words which are these now pronounced. Remember LORD that they are the Words of Thy own Son, that by them He treats for our Remedy. Remember LORD that when the good Woman of *Tekoa* begged of King *David* Pardon for his Son *Abjalom*; that the good King knowing that this Petition was contrived and prosecuted by *Joab* the Captain-General of his Army, he presently yielded, and ordered what she asked: For which *Joab* returned Thanks, acknowledging that the Favour was done to him, and not to the Woman who asked it. Since then I am sent to Thee by Thy only begotten Son, and that it is He has put these Words in my Mouth, that I might say them: It is He that prays for me; Thou givest to Him what is given to me, and it is He that will return Thee eternal Thanks and Praises. Remember LORD that Thou didst not condemn, but rather approve of that unjust Steward, who made Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, who might receive him into their Habitations in the Time of his Necessity. Therefore I the poorest of Thy Creatures, and, which is worse, who have wasted Thy Riches, do labour to unite myself to Thy Son, and value myself on Him, that being so very void of Merit, I may be supported and assisted with His. And since it imports us so much, not to appear before Thy Face without we bring our spiritual Brother *Benjamin*, Thy dear Son, here we fetch

LORD's Prayer.

159

fetch Him and present Him to Thee, that for His Sake we may be bountifully received and regarded. And Thou the only begotten Son of GOD, who art likewise Son of Man, cast Thy Skirt over us, cover our Nakedness and Poverty. We are Thy Kinsmen, banish not from Thy Favour those whom Thou hast made Brethren and Companions of Thy Nature. *Amen.*

22d March,
1726-7.

F I N I S.

